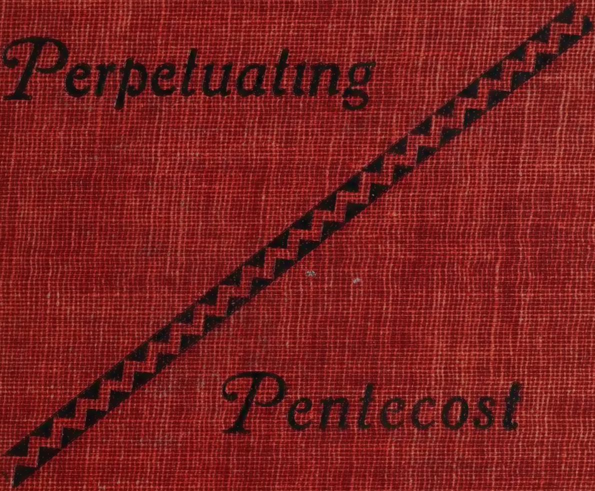
Perpetuating Pentecost



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PERPETUATING PENTECOST

By

JOHN M. VERSTEEG

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TO MY FATHER

"How oft have I,
A little child, hearkened to my father's voice
Preaching the Word . . . . . .
Again I see those circling, eager faces;
I hear once more the solemn-urging words
That tell the things of God in solemn phrase;
Again the deep-voiced, reverent prayer ascends,
Bringing to the still summer afternoon
A sense of the eternal. As he preached
He lived; unselfish, famelessly heroic."

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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Foreword

THE churches are urging the more constant and vital observance of Whitsuntide. Their hope is, of course, that celebrations of Pentecost will result in recurrences of the pentecostal. In Protestantism, the conviction is frequently expressed that Christianity will not advance as it should unless Pentecosts are prevalent. There is a feeling that the church does not give enough attention to the presence, power and purpose of the Spirit. With the shock of a revelation it has come home to many that God is not withholding Pentecosts, but that we are withstanding them. They are asking if we had not better do something about it, and that right soon!

It is my belief that the first thing in order is a frank facing of the whole truth about Pentecost. I shall be happy if this book may prove of some service in that direction.

I wish to express my gratitude to Bishop Herbert Welch, chairman of the Commission on Evangelism for the Methodist Episcopal Church, for reading the manuscript and making valuable suggestions.

JOHN M. VERSTEEG

SOUTH AVENUE CHURCH,

WILKINSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA.

Perpetuating Pentecost

The King James Version of Pentecost

THE PROLOGUE

Jesus . . . being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me: for John truly baptized you with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence. . . . Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth.

✣ ✣ ✣ ✣

These all continued, with one accord, in prayer and supplication.

THE STORY OF PENTECOST

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them: And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

And there were dwelling at Jerusalem, Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed, and marveled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontius and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphilia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Lybia about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.

And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another: What meaneth this? Others, mocking, said, These men are full of new wine. But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophecy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out, in those days, of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: And I will shew wonders in the heavens above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved. Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him, in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pangs of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face; for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved; Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover, also, my flesh shall rest in hope: Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He, seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.

Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

A BIT OF THE HISTORY OF PENTECOST

And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. And daily, in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus. . . .

Then there arose certain of the synagogue . . . disputing with Stephen. And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake. Then they suborned men, and stirred up the people . . . and came upon him . . . and brought him to the council, and set up false witnesses. . . .

And Saul was consenting unto his death. . . .

He made havoc with the church. . . .

Therefore they that were scattered abroad, went everywhere preaching the gospel. . . . And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto . . . Damascus to the synagogues, that, if he found any of this way . . . he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. . . . And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus; and suddenly . . . he heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? . . . I am Jesus! . . . And he, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise . . . and it shall be told thee. . . .

And there was a certain disciple named Ananias . . . who putting his hands on him, said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus . . . hath sent me that thou mightest . . . be filled with the Holy Ghost. . . . And straightway he preached Christ.

PART ONE

Perpetuating Pentecost

CHAPTER I

DESCRIBING PENTECOST

I

OPINIONS differ about Pentecost. One great denomination has this to say: "We believe that Pentecost is not merely an event in time but an ever recurring fact in the present. . . . Our lack of emphasis upon the essential work of the Spirit has often resulted in people turning to spurious pentecostalism which has ended in disruption and disappointment. Their cravings for a fuller and more victorious life were right. Often, we have not given it to them, so they have turned to those outside. They should have been fed within. . . . Let us give ourselves to thinking about and seeking for the unused resources of Pentecost."[1] This is one way of saying that we need Pentecost today.

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[1] General Conference Report of Methodist Episcopal Church, May, 1928.

But others feel differently. Not long ago, a brilliant Congregational preacher was discussing Pentecost at a theological school. He stated his feelings frankly: " These phenomena were not normal. Not only have similar upheavals been exceptional in the subsequent history of the church — though we doubt not but that the Holy Spirit is ever operative among faithful Christians — but also, when disturbances and excitements in a general way parallel have occurred, it has been in the main among persons of unstable nervous organization, like the earnest but untutored men and women of the lower orders who were in the majority among the primitive adherents of the gospel at Jerusalem. And psychologists have shown, with sufficient cogency to convince most men of open mind, that such phenomena are psychopathic. However salutary their effects may be in some isolated instances, they are in origin visceral rather than divine." [2]

Here are two utterances, from equally Christian sources. According to the one, we had best be eager for Pentecost; according to the other, we had best be wary of it. To say that the one stresses the desirable and the other the undesirable elements in Pentecost is but to intensify the question. Should Pentecost be viewed with suspicion? Is Pentecost something upon which we dare not entirely rely? Shall we search for improvements on it, or superior substitutes for it? Are we to seek the Spirit apart from Pentecost or in it?

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[2] Russell Henry Stafford, " The Spiritual Aspect of Preaching," *Effective Preaching* (The Abingdon Press). Reprinted by permission.

II

Let us be sure that we are agreed as to what we are talking about. The Pentecost here discussed is the one recorded in Acts. Pentecost itself was of ancient standing. It came fifty days after Passover, and was the second of three Mosaic feasts. At first, it was the Farmers' festival of the First Fruits. Later Pentecost also came to signify Sinai. On this day, the Decalogue was read in the congregations, and following that, the sons pledged anew the vows the fathers had made before them. What had been a sort of commencement day for the natural crop now became a memorial day to the Law of the Lord. Reform Judaism has gone a step further. It utilizes this day for the yet more glorious and noble purpose of confirming children. With this trinity of meanings comes this day to the modern Jew.

But it is only by dint of mental effort, or with the aid of a commentary or an encyclopedia, that Christians recall the three meanings the day has for their Jewish friends. So overwhelming a content has this Christian event put into Pentecost, that for us the fourth meaning is the first. Browning pointed out that man, on occasion, and God, without limit, " out of three sounds " can frame, " not a fourth sound, but a star." Something like this has happened to Pentecost. For all the other meanings, there is just one for Christians. This meaning inheres in the events of which so stately a record is preserved to us in the King James version of the Book of Acts.

Yet we scarcely do Pentecost justice when we speak so much in terms of the *day* of Pentecost. The Pentecost that had Peter at its center had Paul at its circumference. And then, so far from being spent, the circle of its influence widened. It has touched the centuries. It touches us today. It will touch others tomorrow. There is something perennial about Pentecost. And there is something cumulative about it:

" The outward hath gone, but in glory and power
The Spirit surviveth the things of an hour.
Unchanged, undecaying, its Pentecost flame
On the heart's secret altar is burning the same."

There is a sense in which those who ask for a new Pentecost look for something that is already here. The Spirit of Pentecost always was, and always will be the Spirit of God, unchanged, unchangeable, universal.

But the *day* of Pentecost was unique. There is much more to be said about it, but this much may be said at the start: Pentecost was the day when the universal operation of the Spirit of Christ was revealed to his followers. Whether this revelation came in an orderly or disorderly fashion, or with a mixture of both, needs to be considered too. But this much, at least, we may posit. And the *era* of Pentecost, assumed if not expressed by many of us when we speak of the *day* of Pentecost, was the period in which the direct results of this revelation were pre-eminently manifest. It is this historic contact with Eternal Energy, experienced on that day and expressed in that era, to which we purpose to allude when we speak of Pentecost in these pages. In point of time, this covers roughly the period from the day of Pentecost to the death of Paul.

III

In examining the story of Pentecost, we must not permit discussions as to authorship to influence unduly our decisions as to authenticity. The "we-sections" of Acts, not to mention minor items, have caused considerable doubt as to whether the book came from the quill of Luke. Nevertheless, the preponderant verdict of the scholars to date sustains the belief that the man who wrote the Third Gospel also wrote this account. Just about everybody is agreed, however, that as we have Acts, it is of later issue than Paul's epistles. Luke's thought-forms were unquestionably more Hellenistic than those of the cosmopolitan Paul. He had far more relish for the unusual and ecstatic. But this fact no more nullifies his ability to report the truth about Pentecost than Paul's quaint psychology, now long discarded, destroyed his ability to express the truth as it is in Christ — and, except in minor details, present-day studies of Paul almost unanimously give him a clean slate on this score. A man's views may color his story, but they need not necessarily discredit it. There must be more convincing evidence than that Luke regarded certain facts in a different light than we do nowadays, before we have the right to throw him out of court.

Still, it should be confessed that the details furnished by Luke are not overly clear. From start to finish, one runs into snags. Consider that second chapter. One reads of a group of people, as to the size of which we are left in the dark. There may have been a hundred and twenty, or there may have been twelve. Students generally incline toward the former figure. But no one can tell for sure. The actual attendance is unknown. Pursuant to instructions, these people had for some time been meeting in an upper room. Some think it was a room in the temple; others hold it was a private house. A case can be made out for either. Then at Pentecost they were all together with one accord in one place; which place, no one knows. Neither do we know what was the theme for their thought while they were together. Perhaps they had been discussing the impending holiday. Multitudes were coming to town, or by this time were in it. What a chance to tell the good news! Maybe they spoke of that. We do not know!

Then something happened! But just what that was, no one is able to detail. The Hazzan in his synagogue school had doubtless taught them as children to think of the Spirit of God in terms of wind and fire. He had come by that from the Hebrew seers and bards. What is more natural, therefore, than that these terms should have rushed to mind when the great event took place? Yet all we know from Luke is that there appeared to them to be physical accompaniments to the spiritual revelation.

Nor does subsequent spiritual history shed further light. George Fox, for example, records in his " Journal " a visit to a town " where was a company of professors (believers) and people; here I was moved to pray; and the Lord's power was so great that the house seemed to be shaken. When I had done, some of the professors said it was now as in the days of the apostles, when the house was shaken where they were." If one could come upon an instance where a similar impression was made, and a reliable report of precisely what happened was available, we should have something sure to go by. Yet nowhere do you really light upon the facts. You merely find that mystics have always seen the physical expressive of and subservient to the spiritual.

About all we can be sure of from Luke is that the disciples did not, like the Greeks and others, resort to stimulants to induce a sense of the divine. These early Christians did not attribute the Presence to the phenomenal. They attributed the phenomenal to the Presence: "*He* hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear."

Nor does anyone know what Luke had in mind when he wrote that they "began to speak with other tongues." Most of us have simply allegorized that statement. We have made it say what we wished it to. It has done service to "prove" that religion translates its witness into other tongues; that the Bible society is pentecostal (as indeed it is!); that religion must forever adapt its vocabulary to changing needs; that it must avail itself of the press, the phonograph, the radio, the talkie.

The one thing we dislike to concede is that glossolalia may have been a part of Pentecost! This is not to be wondered at, for glossolalia, so far as we are able to make out, has served evil more than God. Still, in all fairness, there are some things to be said for glossolalia, much as those of us who have seen the mentality and ethics of those latterly given to it, dislike to say them. It registers, or may register, impatience with the ordinary processes of speech; it may indicate the conviction, on the part of those who use it, of the futility of relying on the mechanism of speech to express what to them is most real.

Furthermore, a group may entertain feelings no one of its members alone can hope to express. All of us most of the time are elemental. Talk all we will of our brains, emotion predominates. Now, under great emotion, speech runs to extremes; it may become less intelligent, or more. It is not outside the bounds of possibility that glossolalia has operated at times as a sort of telepathy — perhaps as precisely that — for those who were in the appropriately contagious mood. Hence, had glossolalia occurred, that would not necessarily discount Pentecost. But no one can tell whether it occurred or not. Luke, for all his Greek bias, saw no need to write that down. The facts are simply not to be had. Hence one guess is as good as another — or as bad.

IV

That is just it. The narrative does not furnish wanted details. You may go through the whole of it, and all along the line you will encounter this persistent indefiniteness. Nothing could be more disturbing to the modern temper. Thinkers whose eyes are open note how this lack of detail plays havoc with men's minds. All sorts of fancies are woven about Pentecost. Those who live their religious life in an intellectual underworld find in the pentecostal narrative morsels sweet to their taste. And few sections of Scripture furnish more of a field for those who suffer from chronic spiritual inaccuracy and know not that they do.

This is why a perusal of the literature dealing with Pentecost is so disheartening. One finds interpretations aplenty of this momentous event. Each brand of pentecostalism — and there are many — makes its peculiar offering; while books that treat Pentecost with reverent regard for scholarship and in harmony with the scientific spirit are so few that a considerable search gives trace of scarcely a handful.

To examine Pentecost in the integrity of one's intellect is to take on a large order. It is one thing earnestly to wish to get at the truth. It is another thing to succeed in getting at it. So much of ourselves is in the way; and we are, in considerable part, what our tradition and training have made us. If a certain conception of spiritual processes has been handed down to us; if we have been indoctrinated in specific theories of the Holy Spirit or of Pentecost, we will not find it easy to break away from them, and to face the pentecostal evidence as if it had never before been submitted to us. Try as we will, the things we have been taught will assert themselves. Yet we ought to seek the truth. Of course, we can only try, but we should not do less than that.

To get all there is out of the story of Pentecost without getting out of it less — or more — than is there, is not easy. It never was. Describing Pentecost has always been difficult. To testify truthfully to the presence and power of the Spirit is a task that commands all one's strength.

Take the case of those who were there. If the report in Acts may be trusted — and more of that anon — they had never seen the like of it. Here were phenomena to which none of them had been accustomed in religion. Small wonder that they were variously impressed. There were those whom the whole affair frankly nonplussed: "Are not all these which speak Galilean? How hear we every man in our own tongue?" They would have welcomed an explanation, but had none to suggest. Then there were those who mockingly traced the event to new wine. To them it was an orgy traceable to alcohol.

It took Peter to set them right. No Jew ate or drank before the time of morning prayer. A man who was up and doing at this hour was bound to be sober. He could not have bought a drink so early in the day; the saloons were not open yet! "You wish to know what this is?" asked Peter, in effect. "This is that which was spoken by the prophet. Joel saw this coming. So would you, had you his soul. This is the power of the risen Christ!" He was eager to point out the difference between intoxication and inspiration. The one narrows, the other enlarges life. Here, you will observe, were three interpretations of the one event. According to the first, Pentecost was mysterious; according to the second, it was devilish; according to the third, it was divine.

V

But even those who were confident that it was divine found it no small task to interpret it. The brother to whom we are indebted for that indelible

New Testament account of Pentecost illustrates this. He had been at pains to gather the facts; yet he was hard put to set them down in writing. He could not in honesty say that there came a sound of wind; he had to content himself with saying that there came a sound as of wind. He could not truthfully report that the tongues were tongues of flame; he could only say that the tongues they heard were tongues like flame.

Search as he would, the best he could do was to find illustrations for the illuminations he bore witness to. Even that did not get him far. So he gave up prose. He saw it would not do. He resorted to poetry. There come times when that alone suffices. Poetry is not simply ornamental; it is utilitarian. It enables one to express what one cannot say. When the Arabs describe the tropics in such words as " The soil is like fire and the wind like a flame," we get an idea, swift and sure, of that which detailed accounts leave unsaid. When Luke got to the point where he knew he could at best but give some hints of an event which beggared description, he perceived that only poetry would do for that. Hence he attributed purposive intelligence to the physical. Who shall say in these days, with all we learn about nature, that he was far out of the way? He said the " tongues " knew what they were about; " They distributed themselves"; "They settled on the heads of each of them."

It has never been easy to report the spiritual, let alone interpret it. It never will be. Vital religion goes too deep for words. It is precisely those things that cannot be said that make religion worth while. Coventry Patmore had the truth of it:

> "In divinity and love
> What's best worth saying can't be said."

Luke did his best to report Pentecost. But Pentecosts, in the nature of things, are not reportable! It is this that must be borne in mind in reading the writings of Luke. In unforgetable phrases, he testified to Pentecost, and yet was compelled to leave us in the dark as to many of the things that actually took place. Would a statistician or a logician have performed more creditably than that poet did back there?

CHAPTER II

WHY THE TRUTH EVADES US

I

A DEAL of our difficulty in getting at the truth about Pentecost comes from our effort to improve on Luke. How much ingenuity has gone into the attempts to enhance his report! Yet for all the trouble we have taken, we have surprisingly little to show. We have littered the episode with details. We fail to see the woods for the trees.

Nothing is easier than to lose one's way in the labyrinth of mechanics. Yet how many do just this! The moment they get within reach of the scriptural account of Pentecost, they must be at it. Literal or liberal, there is no staying them. And what are the questions on which they take sides? Here are a few samples: Is the narrative symbolical? Is Peter's speech, in a book notable for speeches, a verbatim report, or is it just a sample of the arguments early Christians presented in their conflicts with Judaism? Were the utterances other than in Greek? If so, why? Did not all present understand it? Yet had Greek only been spoken, how could the hearers have been so surprised at the language? Is not Peter's speech beside the point in spots; is not the whole account of uneven historical value?

Those who feel the urge to settle these and sundry items are welcome and to spare. In the debates one reads, the dogmatisms one encounters, one recalls Oliver Cromwell's plea: "My brethren, by the bowels of Christ I beseech you, bethink you that you may be mistaken." Most treatises on Pentecost put one in mind of that.

II

This is not to say that men have not the right to play searchlights upon all the facts. They have not only the right, but the duty. But to understand Pentecost, it must be got at in higher fashion. Here, as elsewhere, "the letter killeth, the spirit giveth life." Concentration on the details may obscure all that Pentecost entails. It is true, of course, as Henry Suso once observed, that "he who finds the inward in the outward is more spiritual than he who can only find the inward in the inward." But it is also true that one may be ever learning the outer facts, and, just because of that, never be able to come to a knowledge of the inner Fact.

What sorry shrift we have made of religion by acting as if the explanation of an experience could indicate the validity or determine the value of the experience itself. It is this unproved assumption men of the Leuba type of mind make; and their words carry weight because so few realize how entirely fictional their claim is. Perhaps they have themselves fooled! We ought to have explanations. They are desirable, for the clearer the reason we are able to give ourselves for the faith that is in us, the more will our personalities be unified and the greater will be our power to advance the cause. The head will not then say to the heart, "Thou fool!" Nor will anybody else, too polite to say this, think it!

Explanations, furthermore, are inevitable, for the mind is so made that it must needs seek to explain that which the soul explores. Explanations have been wrong, but explanation cannot be. Only, the best explanation of anything really human — to say nothing just now of the divine — is necessarily inadequate, the experience being dynamic, the explanation static; the experience being life, the explanation logic. All history proclaims trumpet-tongued that "creeds pass, rites change, no altar standeth whole." Not the explanation of religion, but the experience of it is "an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast."

Yet off we go, the minute our eyes light upon the recital in Acts, talking as if an explanation could really encompass the deepest experience of religion; when we know full well, the moment we stop to think of it, that religion in the final run accounts for itself only within itself; that it is self-verifying at heart. James Martineau used to say that you can never explain the moral experience by reducing it to non-moral elements. That holds for religion. " Spiritual things are spiritually discerned."

III

This is why we need to make sure that we do not take psychological explanations of Pentecost for more than they are worth. Psychology has fully established itself as a branch of research, yet it is far from being an exact science. Psychologists are at each other all the while; whether the predicates of some should be the postulates of all is a moot question. Certain it is that dogmatism still flourishes where data are debatable, and that a behaviorist, to cite but one of the varieties, can behave as fanatically as any fundamentalist ever did, and do it just as unconsciously!

Psychologists of religion, and indeed their profane brethren, rush headlong — and sometimes headstrong — at accounts such as the one in Acts, and rush in where angels, if they knew what they were about, would surely fear to tread. Their minds are pretty well made up in advance that there is nothing there of which to stand in awe. "Nothing could be easier," said Leuba, "for the psychologist than to show in the life and feeling and thought disturbances not depending on known natural causes"; that is, if they were really there! But, says Leuba, they are not: "In religious lives accessible to psychological investigation nothing requiring the admission of superhuman influences has been found."[1]

This statement shows how a man can go blind with both eyes open! He speaks — it is his wont — as if he were the baptized Caesar of the psychological hierarchy; as if, when he pipes, all others dance unto him. The simple fact that he doesn't, phases him not. But let that pass. The issue hangs on that word "superhuman." Inge or Lippman should get after that word; for it is in imminent danger of becoming a shibboleth. For some two millenniums now, Christians have been insisting that the superhuman functions in the human, that the transcendent is in the immanent, that as Rufus Jones has so finely put it, "the beyond is within." Increasingly, they have sought to stress the naturalness of the divine, and the divineness of the natural.

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[1] J. H. Leuba, *A Psychological Study of Religion* (Constable & Co., London).

They have not always made their meaning clear, but it is this they have sought to say. When a psychologist opposes the superhuman to the human he does something no serious Christian would ever think of doing! To use a paradox, even when he separates them, he never parts them! Superhuman influences do not " require admission "; they inhere. What they do require is recognition; and thereby hangs another tale.

The psychologists of religion seize upon the auditions, the photisms, the ecstatic utterances which one can, as easily as not, read in the Pentecost narratives. They do this, many of them, to let you see for yourself that Pentecost is of a piece with dubious religious demonstrations. And, as we saw at the start, some exceptional preachers feel a similar concern. Think of Pentecost as wholly prose, and you had best follow their advice. Then you cannot take your hands — or your mind — off Pentecost soon enough. But if the soul of the poet is in you, they need not frighten you!

Those awe-begetting words with which they allude to Pentecost lose their awe the longer you consider them. The case would stand differently if these words gave you more distinct information about Pentecost than Luke's. Examine them long enough, and you find that the lingo of psychology is not one whit more expressive and is at least equally obscure as to what really went on. At the risk of repetition, let it be said again that to report the actual with the factual has never been easy. Nowhere does the limitation of language appear more conspicuously. The actual itself is the unspeakable, the unutterable. It must forever be to us the great unsaid! Which is the very reason why, everlastingly, we shall be trying to say it! The psychologists get about as far as folks are able to get when they seek to reduce poetry to prose. What we need is not to have Pentecost rationalized, but to have it realized. No; Pentecost is not condemned out of its own mouth because its reporter, notwithstanding careful investigations, was compelled to picture that which he could not detail. There was nothing else to be done.

Not all who warn against Pentecost are against religion. It is amazing — if not amusing — to note what fine mystics many who minimize mysticism are! Their fear for the tinsel and their zeal for the real magnificently give them away! They are mystics, and do not know it:

"You may break, you may shatter, the vase if you will,
But the scent of the roses will cling round it still."

Still, their very caution may be incautious!

IV

Neither should it be supposed that because suggestion or emotion entered in, therefore Pentecost was necessarily abnormal. When shall we get sense enough to see that there is nothing wrong with suggestion *per se?* It renders yeoman service. The people who talk as if it were all wrong for religion to make large use of suggestion are themselves woefully wrong. For not one of them gets on without suggestion! It has to be used in every realm of life. How could it be otherwise? If everything had to be examined critically and at first hand by every one of us, there would not be time enough left to do anything else. We could never reach rock-bottom!

You cannot, and, as a matter of fact, do not expect everything to be reasoned through. There are multitudes of things you are literally compelled to take on someone else's say-so; multitudes of things you assume just because they are assumed. Suggestion is a vast time and energy saver. Many suggested ideas are entirely rational and beneficial. To many of us, in many of our experiences, the words of scripture might be applied: " Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." It is unfortunate that in popular thought " suggestion " should be linked with " abnormal," when so very much of it is normal throughout. It is still more unfortunate that even psychologists should fall into this error, which they would be first to denounce in connections other than this. To assume that suggestion as such is suspect is hardly the business of those who cherish a reputation for clear thought.

And, after all, what is wrong with emotion? Emotionalism, of course, needs to be guarded against; it has been and still remains the bane of religion. It makes all the difference in the world whether you rest content with emotion or go on to real devotion. Only when the latter is the case does one truly live; and Pentecost, it may now be stated, is the Feast of the Fullness of Life.

I sat in a crowded hall, near many of foreign birth, whose English was generally askew. They were dressed neatly, for the most part; yet some of them were but shabbily dressed, and these clothes were their very best. As the diplomas were given out, I looked some of those parents full in the face, for they were as a song to me. They could hardly contain themselves for a holy sort of impatience; for there were those present who had hoped for this in lands far away when their children were small or when they had yet hoped for children. They had looked for a land that was very far off, and they had come to this land. And God, they felt, had been good to them and to their children, and they had stinted themselves and saved and planned and now — now a voice on the platform called out " Rosie Fallinsky! " or something like that. A man with soul in his face handed a girl a diploma, and the girl smiled nervously and curtsied ever so politely, and oh! the beaming joy that came to that cheaply dressed man and that plainly dressed woman! Had I been able to offer them ten thousand dollars to forego that moment of joy they would have spurned me, for all their need of money and the Jewish blood in their veins! That moment they were feasting on life. And it was their poverty that enriched their feast. In their emotion, they received the recompense of the reward!

Some psychologist, not knowing better, might call their ecstacy a " disturbance "; but what man of us would be party to folly such as his? It is time we had done with discounting spiritual experiences because the emotions, to those who examine but do not experience them, appear to be excessive. Even science is impossible without sympathy — an emotional quality that is intended to tone up, and not down, our intellectual processes. There can be no high thinking where there is no deep feeling. Pentecost cannot be, and therefore should not be measured by its emotional manifestations; but its emotional manifestations, with due allowance made for the theology and Greek-mindedness of the reporter, may well attest its essential sanity.

It would be ridiculous to condemn out of hand as emotionally excessive an experience such as Pentecost, just because people were hearing and seeing things, and feeling them. Had Pentecost resulted in dehumanizing folks, in giving them less heart, less mind, less purpose, then we might well begin to suspect its emotions. But if, as the evidence abundantly indicates, their lives were furthered by the experience, and a great cause signally advanced, we may safely assume that, whatever the wording of the record concerning them, the emotions were as proper a part of the process as those of the parents of whom mention has been made. Psychologists should beware of psychologisms; of rationalizations that cause them to fasten on a given event suspicions they had to begin with. As a matter of fact, nearly all of us these days are altogether too emotional in our fear of emotions!

V

Please do not get the wrong idea. I have not attempted to prove that Pentecost knew nothing of disturbances, auditions, photisms, suggestion, emotion, glossolalia and the like. I have simply been trying to indicate that there are at least a few reasons for minimizing the popular and persistent charge that Pentecost is necessarily discredited by these. If Pentecost did have these manifestations in their derogatory forms, all we can say is that then it was a solitary exception to a rule otherwise universal. For in all other instances, they have militated against the higher interests of religion; provided, of course, they held the center of the stage, and were not just out on the fringe of things. You cannot gather sane proceeds from insane proceedings. It is this that thus far has been stressed.

In passing, we might suggest that it would be well for those who are moved to warn the unsophisticated against these delusions, were they to seek documents other than the Pentecost narratives to enforce their warnings. Their words might then appear less evidently labored.

Were psychology competent to pass judgment on Pentecost, it would need to make reckoning with other facts than those to which it usually resorts. For Pentecost deserves to be judged less by the reports we have of it than by the results we have from it. We can be sure Whom it came from only when we are aware of what it came to. It is simplicity itself to aver that the same manifestations apparent at Pentecost have been attendant upon other and none too creditable revivals, and have been known to occur in religiously overwrought groups. It is not quite so simple, however, to cite any other case where these much-berated phenomena produced similar results. If there is no other religious episode comparable to this one in traceable historical results and in movements that are still operative and dynamic with no sign of abatement, men ought to go slow in judging the unique and unparalleled.

But the fact is that psychology, despite all it knows by now, is not competent to pass on Pentecost. This is nothing against it, but it is the case. That which gives Pentecost its meaning is exactly that transcendent and objective element concerning which psychology, by virtue of its limitation as a science, can have nothing to say. That some psychologists, who have nothing to say, say there is nothing to say, does not alter this fact. One who has caught the spirit and significance of Pentecost can safely make inquiry into its psychology, even though his investigation, likely, will not get him far. For all others it is dangerous; also unprofitable. To them the story of Pentecost will ever have to be an enigma.

It may be objected that all this too lightly brushes aside the inexplicable factors of Pentecost. The point that is being made in this discussion is that the explicable facts shed so much light that we need not delay long at sight of the shadows cast by the inexplicable. There has been entirely too much attention given to the story of Pentecost, and not enough to the history of Pentecost. Never has that blunder been exposed for our souls' good in abler fashion than by Alfred Noyes:

"He groped into the orchestral universe
As one who strives to trace a symphony
Back to its cause, and with laborious care
Feels with his hand the wood of the violins,
And bids you mark — O good, bleak, honest soul,
So fearful of false hopes! — that all is hollow.
He tells you on what tree the wood was grown.
He plucks the catgul, tells you whence it came,
Gives you the name and pedigree of the cat;
Nay, even affirms a mystery, and will talk
Of sundry dark vibrations that affect
The fleshly instruments of the human ear;
And so, with a world-excluding accuracy —
Oh, never doubt that every step was true! —
Melts the great music into less than air
And misses everything.
                                        Everything! On one side
The music soaring endlessly through heavens
Within the human soul; on the other side,
The unseen Composed of whose transcendent life
The music speaks in souls made still to hear.
He clings to his *vera causa*. In that law

He saw the way of the Power, but not the Power
Determining the way."[2]

VI

A word ought to be said about those who deem the matters connected with Pentecost fertile soil for theological speculations. For those of us who have a flair for theology, this is a major temptation. But we ought not to yield to it. That is, not if we are really out to understand Pentecost. We dare never forget that Pentecost is not essentially tied up with the explanation of its episodes. The longer one meditates upon Pentecost, the surer one becomes that the details are items upon which we need not dwell for long. We are little concerned with what actually happened; we are tremendously concerned with what really occurred. That this is not a mere play on words, we shall presently see.

We can easily forgive Peter for injecting his peculiar theological opinions into his interpretation of Pentecost. He was so close to it, he had hardly time to take all the facts into account. But we should be unable to forgive ourselves, were we to copy him in this regard. Pentecost eludes theological technique, exactly as it cannot be measured by the yardsticks of psychology. It was a religious event, something supremely spiritual; and theology, for all its herculean achievements, has devised no spectroscope that is able adequately to relay all of its constituents. It will be many a moon before it does!

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[2] Alfred Noyes, "Protagonists," from *The Book of Earth* (Frederick A. Stokes Company). Reprinted by permission.

With all this said, it should be added that no competent theologian or New Testament scholar today doubts the essential accuracy of the account of Pentecost. That many of them regard it as poetry based on fact in no way dissipates this claim, as has been hinted heretofore. It was Aristotle who remarked that " the poet ranks higher than the historian because he achieves a more general truth." The entire rationale of the New Testament recital, as well as known facts concerning the early church, bears convincing testimony to the historicity of Pentecost.

Should any one wish for proof outside of these, it may be said that the historicity of Pentecost is tied up with the authenticity of Christ. If he was the Truth, the other took place. None of the spiritually initiated can ever doubt the actuality of Pentecost. They realize that nothing short of a Pervasion of Power could have made a Fellowship of the Spirit out of that bewildered, cringing little company of disciples.

And they also know that the historicity of

Pentecost is tied up with the authenticity of religious experience, and that the interpretation of Pentecost comes to us only by the incarnation of the Spirit. They know by experience, which is the only ultimate proof of the reality of Pentecost, that the outpouring of the Spirit on those who are spiritual is as inevitable as the inpouring of intelligence on those who are minded to learn. Explain the incidentals of Pentecost as you have a mind to, but the incident, the tremendous spiritual epic, must have occurred. It had to occur because it always has to occur to produce the results of a Pentecost. There is no other way. " All these things the Spirit writes on truly awakened hearts."

This is why Dr. Cadman was justified in writing: " The claim that the tenets of Christ's Gospel are susceptible of incorporation into the social structure, and that they were originally intended so to be, does not rest on forced meanings of esoteric allusions. The Acts of the Apostles itself validates it. These earliest annals of the Apostolic Church record the new Faith at work in the old world which it was destined to overcome. Its conquests were not confined to individuals whom it so conspicuously changed. A social consciousness embracing revolutionizing ideals, principles and forces, hitherto unknown to contemporary Jewish thought or to the

Roman rule, was plainly perceptible in the converts of Pentecost."[3]

It is because so many look chiefly at the incidentals of the day of Pentecost rather than at the significance of the era of Pentecost, that their eyes are holden, and they cannot see what it is all about. On the alluring path of facts they miss the enriching trail of truth.

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[3] S. Parkes Cadman, *The Christ of God* (The Macmillan Company).

CHAPTER III

THE TRYST WITH THE GIFT

I

PENTECOST came because Jesus had gone. It came that his Spirit might live on among men. Jesus knew that his going would do his disciples good. It was, as the Fourth Gospel states, expedient for them that he go away. For one thing, his going would make men of them. They had been rather childish so far. They would more likely grow up when they had to get on alone. Initiative would do for them what instruction could not. For another thing — really the same, only deeper — his going would make Christians of them. We seldom recall that Jesus had to go through his ministry with not a good Christian among his disciples! The Gospels preserve to us some frank scenes in which the jealousies, bickerings and stupidities of the disciples major. They were neither open-minded nor open-souled. The spirit of their lives was wrong. This grieved our Lord exceedingly. But there was no mending matters. They were so slow of heart to understand.

Once they realized that Jesus took the things he stood for seriously enough to die for them, they would see the light. They would see the light, that is, about Jesus and themselves. They would see Jesus for what he was. They would see in him that to which their eyes heretofore had been shut. They would see the connection God had with Christ. They would come to know the personality of the person they had known, the eternal, universal validity of that spirit of his.

The going of Jesus would make the coming of the Spirit desirable. And it would make the coming of the Spirit necessary. For they would see themselves at a disadvantage. Someone has told of that lad who, having stained-glass windows in mind, defined a saint as " a person who lets the light shine through." They would come to realize that their Lord had been that sort of person; while they had not. In short, they would feel their need of inspiration. They would come to understand that it takes the Spirit to set the spirit free. Pentecost had to come to further the Spirit of Jesus in lives which his life had touched.

II

Pentecost came because Jesus had gone. And it came because those through whom it came were disciples. As indicated above, one must not put too much content in that word "disciples," if one cares to be consonant with the facts. Even at that, these men had come under the influence of Jesus. The twelve had seen much of him; most of the others less; over some he doubtless had more influence than others; but they had all had the feel of Christ. One thing is certain: religion had been stressed to them. In their hearts they knew that the more of spirituality people get, the better off they are. Religion extends horizons, imparts a sense of values, creates confidence, corrects conduct. Something of this they must have learned.

It is by a true instinct that some poets picture Judas, in the process of debating the betrayal with himself, struggling to down the superior spiritual impulses that insisted on making themselves felt. There was no living with Jesus without coming into contact with lifting ideas and ideals. There was no getting away from the spirit of the Man. To turn against him meant to be haunted to the end by the spirit he had shown. The disciples had been slow learners and poor followers. Their motives were badly mixed. Selfish traits would out, even in their spiritual moments. But for all that, they had caught a glimpse of the splendor he was. That much was in their favor. And that made Pentecost possible to them. They were disposed to heed Christ, though often enough they did not. Jesus made large allowances for them. He knew how human they were. Yet it went to his soul that he could not get one of them actually to "think like God." They insisted upon thinking like Jews!

III

But here was one time when they did take Jesus at his word. Was it because his going had sensitized their souls? Pentecost came because the disciples obeyed Jesus. He had told them of its possibilities. He knew the dwelling place of power, and how much there is to religion; and he also knew how men ought to go about it to get most out of religion, and put most into it. So he took pains to tell them how to prepare themselves. For Pentecost is of use only to the prepared! To all others it is a puzzle, a stumbling block, a folly, an aberration. Only those who are duly prepared can do anything with a quantum or relativity theory; the rest of us are not qualified. Only those who are prepared can make out a Pentecost when it is about and tell what it is for. Jesus knew that. So he gave them specific instructions.

They were to wait. The time element would have to enter in. Application is as essential to spiritual success as to scientific. You do not rush up to a language and master it, and you do not rush up to a Pentecost and experience it. That waiting did the disciples a world of good. It equipped them spiritually. Pentecost can never be known by those who rush through religion at airplane pace. One must take time out, and put time in, if one is to experience Pentecost, or anything like it.

Not only were the disciples to wait, but they were to wait in a given way. In the nature of the case, their waiting was to be collective. They were bound to wait together. And right here, we come upon the central fact of Pentecost. Pentecost was a collective spiritual experience. We shall come back to this fact later on. Let it but be remarked at this point that to think of Pentecost without this fact in mind is to lose the major message of Pentecost itself. The direct revelation, it is true, came to only a small group of followers. But the significant fact is that it was a group, and a group waiting in the hope of the Spirit of God.

Besides, they were to wait expectantly. They were to wait for what the Father had promised. They were to be full of anticipation of the coming in of God. Then the Spirit would come — in time and on time. He could not have come had they not taken their time, experienced the significance of fellowship, and expected things to happen religiously. Jesus knew what he was about when he urged: Wait! Wait for what the Father has promised; " tarry till you get the power." That was his spiritual strategy. It got the disciples ready for the larger life.

Not that it rid them completely of their superstitions. They still mixed prayer with luck in casting lots for Mathias, without the faintest suspicion that God had a Paul in the offing. But they "continued with one accord," and gave themselves to "prayer and supplication." And Pentecost overtook them "with one accord in one place." They were doing what Jesus had told them, when Pentecost came to them. They were trusting him for guidance.

Conversion has been defined as "a revolution in sentiment." It is also a revelation of reality. They discovered how present one who is absent can be. That wait went a long way toward making Christians of them. Always, afterwards, they looked back to Pentecost as *their* day. And so it was. But we, who have history to go by, can see that the day of Pentecost was Jesus' day. For long, they had been merely Christ's disciples. This day, the disciples became Christ's kinsmen. Henceforth it was evident that Christ had come into his own in their lives.

These, then, are the reasons Pentecost came: Jesus had gone; the disciples stood in need of the Spirit; and they obeyed their Master until they were ready for that which God had ready for them.

IV

But it is not enough to know why Pentecost came. We need to know exactly what Pentecost was. To this, then, let us turn our thought.

Pentecost was a gift. God initiated it. Not the disciples. Not even Peter. God did it! The Pentecost of the records is not of human origin. And those who dwell deep spiritually would realize that, even were the records not explicit on this score. Naught but the God-begotten is power-begetting. The story of Pentecost in particular, and of Acts, in general, is not the story of what men did, but of what the Spirit did. That title, " The Acts of the Apostles," is confusing. Had it to be done over again, it might better be put: The Acts of God Through the Apostles. That would be more like it. For Acts does not interpret the Holy Spirit in terms of holy men, but it interprets holy men in terms of the Holy Spirit. Acts tells of what men did because of what they were; it explains conduct by character. It is as if it were continually pointing a finger at men like Peter and Paul, and saying: " God made them the men they were! "

That this gift came because men held out their souls for it, as we hold out our hands, in no wise discounts the directness of the giving. The accounts stress the divine. That the Spirit came to men, and made his way into the deeps of them, is the main point the story of Pentecost makes! To miss that point is to miss *the* point. The divine initiative must be kept clear. Pentecost is the Epic of the Eternal Energy. The spirit in which they met should be connected, but not confused, with the Spirit they met. The Spirit was not created by them. He was given to them.

We do well to give this point some emphasis. " Faith," says one distinguished investigator, " is . . . the postulate that what appears in our consciousness with the felt attribute of givenness *does give something* and is not merely a freak of our mental constitution. . . . In all true religion man confesses himself the utter recipient. He acknowledges that which is beyond him. . . . He is admitted into things which remain closed to the more active and self-reliant endeavors. Man cannot storm his way into the City of Light. The best and highest is a gift. Man comes to the verge and limit of his bounded experience and his finite capacities, and bows down before the unimaginably great. It is in that attitude of submission and of reception that man has risen above himself." [1]

One does not need to go to Christian people for proof of the sense of givenness. Even Bertrand

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[1] K. Edward, *Religious Experience, Its Nature and Truth* (Chas. Scribner's Sons).

Russell, in his work with children, became convinced that the unselfish spirit is somehow received, not made. No one should commit the blunder of reading utter passivity into this receptivity. It takes brains for the skipper to receive the wind in his sails. The wind is given, but he must know how to utilize it. The indwelling of the Spirit gives all the more room for, and play to, intelligence.

God the giver, man the recipient; that is the way religion goes. No wonder then that Pentecost should stress that at the start. The Spirit descended, settled on, came on; and always, always, it was given. Whether you speak of the Spirit as " he," thinking of the personality of the Spirit; or whether you speak of the Spirit as " it," thinking of the processes of the Spirit, will make little difference if only you understand that both are true. You must always see the divine in the pentecostal.

Perhaps the poet was not quite so clear as he might have been when he wrote:

" 'Tis heaven alone that is given away,
'Tis only God may be had for the asking."

But what he wanted to say is that " heaven " gives itself away; it is its nature to do so; God inherently offers himself freely; he *asks* us to ask for him, for the gift without the asker, were it possible, would be bare. It is God who is doing the giving, who takes the initiative. That cannot be kept too clear. Pentecost, intimacy with Immanence that it was, predicates the transcendent. God gave Pentecost the moment he could, which was the moment the disciples of Jesus felt their need of his Spirit enough to be willing to live his way.

V

Pentecost was the gift of a Spirit. We generally say that it was the gift of the Holy Spirit. That is the staid way of putting it. A different way would be to say that Pentecost was the gift of God. The gift was an imponderable. It was an invasion, an indwelling, an incarnation, an impelling; all of these together, not in the sense of an interruption of life, but in the sense of an inspiration of life. Here was a gift in which the Giver gave himself. The Holy Spirit means, not a substitute for God, nor just a section of him, but God himself present " in the plenitude of his power."

Many people go amiss in their thinking about Pentecost because they regard the gift of the Holy Spirit as a sudden, arbitrary act on the part of God. There has never been a time when God has not been eagerly imparting his Spirit. God is the Spirit of Life, the source of reality, the illumination of insight, the power of love, the alpha as well as the omega of service. You see from this how impossible it is to put him into words! For us, the spatial is all the while interfering with the spiritual. That was likely the case with the disciples. The Hebrew was wont to think of Spirit in terms of invasion to the neglect of immanence; and the Greek thought of immanence to the neglect of invasion. Probably because of this, local and Hellenistic Jews had less in common than their common religious affiliation would appear to guaranty. Yet, at Pentecost, Hellenistic Jews received the Spirit, and local Jews, by the scores, had the same glad experience.

There is this difference between the gift of a thing and the gift of a Spirit. The one is material, the other spiritual; the one may be seen quantitatively, the other must be sensed qualitatively; the one is outer, the other inner; you get the one, you become the other; the one is yours, the other you. It stands to reason that the giving of the Holy Spirit is the giving of that which it is neither in nature, human nature, nor society *per se* to impart, yet which all three are intended of God to convey. The God of Pentecost was at once immanent and transcendent; this is why they recognized the fulfilment of prophecy the moment the Spirit controlled their lives. They felt that that which took control of them controlled events; that the "beyond" was "within"; that the impartation of such immanence was transcendent business! God is greater than, yet greatest in, the human experience of the Spirit. To the innocent bystander, this will sound like arrant nonsense. But he that has ears to hear will hear what it is the Spirit has to say touching these matters.

The manner of the coming of the Spirit into the lives of men nobody knows. " The Spirit," says one recent writer, " does not pass into men like an electric fluid into a wire, or a force of nature operating like gravitation." Maybe not. And then again, who knows? All we know is that an electric fluid passes into a wire; just how, who can tell? It is impossible to pigeon-hole the Spirit's operations. But, if we cannot with absolute certainty place them, we can surely trace them. By their fruits we can know them.

VI

This becomes a bit clearer when one stops to consider that Pentecost was the gift of the Spirit of Jesus. It brought Christ's followers the same eternal energy which had made Jesus the power he was. The reinforcement of the Spirit of Jesus came into their lives. An old fisherman once asked his minister: " Don't you think, sir, that Christians nowadays are much more like the disciples before Pentecost than the disciples after it? "

Whether or not there is warrant for the answer his question implied, certain it is that there was a difference in the disciples, with Pentecost as the clear line of demarkation. It was this connection with Jesus that brought them a new experience of the Spirit. Prior to Pentecost, they had been, for the most part, instructed disciples. After Pentecost, they were inspired disciples. They had a new spirit. Before Pentecost, they were irregularly religious. After it, they were pre-eminently spiritual. Their Christianity now became less a doing what a leader told them, and more a being what a Savior was.

So it comes that since their day the coming of the Holy Spirit has meant one thing, and only one, to Christians: that the Spirit of Jesus is the " express image " of the Spirit of God.[2] We will do Christianity real service if we will strive to dissipate the notion that the Holy Spirit is some vague and magical influence, and if we will bear constant witness that none but the Spirit of Jesus motivates God.

It is this gift of the Spirit of Jesus that makes Pentecost unique. The disciples now came to look out upon life with Jesus' eyes. Now they became convinced of the character of the control of the universe. They knew it for what it is. It had been manifest in the Man they had had as Master. Until the Spirit came, they did not understand Jesus. Now they saw that God could be no less than Christ's Spirit revealed him to be. The best men have not always been agreed as to just what is the best. But they have agreed, with remarkable unanimity, as to what is the best spirit. It was this collective recognition, reception and translation of the Spirit that gave Pentecost its significance.

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[2] Of course, for theological purposes, we are entirely at liberty to think of the Spirit as distinct from Jesus.

I am far from saying that all the disciples at once reasoned out the reality they encountered. I am saying that this is what it came to when they did reason it out. The more one gets of a pentecostal experience, the more he will see in Christ. It will be no time before he will see God in him. He may be wrong, but you cannot convince him, by whatever name or nickname you call his failure to be convinced:

" Whoso hath felt the Spirit of the Highest
Cannot confound nor doubt him nor deny:
Yea with one voice, O world, though thou deniest,
Stand thou on that side, for on this am I." [3]

" End is there none " to Christ's meaning, so seen. To catch his spirit is to catch the further splendor to which that spirit leads. The mystics tell us that Christ " is what he awakens in others." At Pentecost, Jesus awakened God in folks. Jesus in his Spirit awakened more of God in them than ever he had in the flesh.

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[3] Frederic W. H. Myers, "Saint Paul," from *Collected Poems* (The Macmillan Company).

The exceptional feature of Pentecost is the type of power that, for the first, became released among Christ's disciples. It was the power of the conviction of the universal and everlasting validity of the Spirit of Jesus. As time went on, it became increasingly clear to the early Christians that " other foundation can no man lay " for a view of life that can stand the test.

CHAPTER IV

THE KOINONIA

I

"IT is a familiar fact," says Canon Raven, " that those who have shared a great experience and been inspired by a common loyalty manifest what is usually called a 'group personality.' . . . It is certain that under conditions of intimacy and in response to a common ideal men find themselves so sensitive to one another and so integrated by the same motive that they act as if under the control of a single will."[1]

Had we more of the open eye in our reading of the records, our picture of the early Christians would be far more vivid. We should then see what for the most part we but dimly perceive. We should understand the significance of the Fellowship. For that was the major outcome of Pentecost.

Jesus had insisted upon the togetherness of the disciples. But Pentecost convinced them of the value, the uses, the potentialities of the Fellowship.

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[1] Charles E. Raven, *The Quest of Religion* (Richard R. Smith, Inc.).

They there saw the Holy Spirit possess a group. As Professor Rauschenbusch once pointed out, they did not merely, as do we, define religion as the life of God in the soul of man. They thought of religion as the life of God in the fellowship of man. Pentecost was the revelation of the Spirit to and through a group, which was thereby impelled to translate and transmit that Spirit.

Pentecost meant making the life of the Spirit effective in the fellowship of the disciples. The disciples discovered the glory of fellowship. With the mystics, they came to feel that "fellowship is heaven; the lack of it is hell."

In the revivals of the church, the results have chiefly been tallied in terms of individuals; at Pentecost, the results were chiefly tabulated in terms of the Fellowship!

The Fellowship, that is, and not the church. Those who prize logic can, of course, insist that whenever you get such likemindedness and likespiritness as came to these disciples, you have a church in essence, even though those present regard it only as a fellowship or family. For a church, whatever else it is, is a body of men and women banded together on purpose to keep the spiritual supreme. It is with more than an ordinary show of reason, therefore, that men are able to say that at Pentecost the Spirit united the disciples into a church, even though not a person present was aware of this!

Yet, persuasive and even romantic as this reasoning is, it does scant justice to those who were actually there. For it never occurred to those folks that they were in the act of separating themselves from Jewry. Jews were they of many nations; but for all that, they were Jews; and had no desire to be known for anything else. They simply felt they could be better Jews for being Christian. It never dawned on them that the new faith would supersede the old. That only came after the memorable speech of Stephen, to which we shall refer a little later. In Acts, and in the Pauline epistles, many a verse indicates what a heartache-begetting business it was for a Jew to get to the place where he was willing to classify himself as a Christian and let it go at that.

II

Let us remember that Christianity was originally a laymen's movement. No clerical leaders were about, to take the matter in hand. So far as we know Paul was the first man with any prominent church connection to ally himself actively with the Christian group. When he did, it was easy to be seen that one who was trained and expert had taken charge of affairs! It is nevertheless significant that, at Pentecost, it was the spiritual force of the corporate group, and not the contagious enthusiasm of some far-seeing leader, that brought to pass what no one of its members for a moment dreamed of.

The thought of a separate church did not come to them readily; in fact, at first, it did not come at all. They were seeking for a word that would describe them. Perhaps they never quite agreed on one, nor bothered to seek agreement. But it amounted to a "Koinonia," a fellowship, a communion. According to our Roman Catholic friends, the three thousand converts became " the assembly," and the apostles " the teaching church." Actually, nothing of the sort happened! What overjoyed them was the feeling that " we being many are one bread, one body: for we all partake of the one bread." The democracy of Pentecost must be kept clear.

They did discover in the Fellowship truths and powers that were new to them. The activity of the Spirit was revealed to them in the group. The Fellowship was recognized as the channel of spiritual revelation and power. The Koinonia was best able to transmit and translate the things of the Spirit.

Attention is now being called by New Testament students to the fact that we suppose that the early Christians cherished the fellowship of the apostles, when the truth is that, while they doubtless did this too, it was the teaching of the apostles *and the fellowship* they regarded most. Paul finally gave it a happy turn when he termed it "The Fellowship of the Spirit." That is precisely what it was. When we give or receive that benediction, "The communion of the Holy Ghost be with you," you have in mind the impact of the Spirit on the lives of individual believers; but the man who wrote that phrase, and who would be the first to say "Amen" to our interpretation of it, expressed quite another idea. He was praying that the Fellowship might be with us; that the comradeship of "The Beloved Community" might give us heart.

A Sam Walter Foss may argue that "the church is man," and may tell us that

"When any living man in awe gropes Godward in
    his search,
Then in that hour, that living man becomes the
    living Church,"[2]

but no person in his right mind can imagine that such an individualistic interpretation has any resemblance to what the early Christians saw in the Koinonia. Robert Barclay furnished a more accurate picture of what the early Christians saw in their Fellowship when he wrote: " When I came into the silent assemblies of God's people, I felt a secret power among them, which touched my heart; and as I gave way unto it I found the evil weakening in me and the good raised up."

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[2] "Dreams in Homespun," *The Higher Catechism* (Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Co.).

The charge has been made that, so far from giving its members light and leading spiritually, the Fellowship registered the first step in the departure of Christendom from Christianity. That in the thought of the disciples similarity existed between the coming of the Kingdom and the coming of the Spirit is quite uniformly agreed. Did the love of the Fellowship get the better of the love of the Kingdom — that Realm of Love for which Jesus had labored, and of which he had talked so much that the gospels report his use of the phrase over a hundred times?

The chapters that follow will make more of an answer to this question than the present discussion requires. Let it but be said here that the evidence seems to be abundant that the Fellowship preserved the Kingdom idea intact. Only, judged by the calendar, the Fellowship did not last many years. It was not long after the Fellowship had become the Church that the genuine Kingdom hope died out of their hearts. For then, alas, they began to occupy their time " steadfastly gazing into heaven," looking for Jesus to come back.

III

The early chapters of Acts show the Fellowship in full force. No one supposed that the Spirit was leading them away from Judaism. It was Stephen who saw it first, and through whose instrumentality the issue became clear. He was " a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost," with the sort of mind even the intelligentsia would feel obliged to respect. He was a product *par excellence* of Pentecost. Himself a Jew — although, significantly, a Hellenistic one — he said openly that Judaism's primacy was ended. His words must have shocked even those of his fellow Christians who heard him utter them. But he had the single eye and knew what he was about. The charges brought against him I shall refer to again later on.

In his reply, he leaned heavily on the Greek Old Testament, quoting it almost verbatim. Moses, he argued, had been good enough in his day, and God should be thanked for him; but now, in the day of Christ, Moses' word was no longer the last. Though Stephen was unwilling to concede that he spoke "blasphemously," he had to own that he did speak " words against this holy place and the law," as the Jews saw and understood them; and that he had said that " this Jesus of

Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us" ; for that was just what he had said, and said deliberately.

He was not the first to say that, for Jesus himself had said that to the Samaritan woman; but the group to which he was talking had nothing of her openmindedness. In a better spirit than his hearers gave him credit for, that was the very point he wanted to make, and he lost no time reiterating it to his accusers and judges. He died a martyr to a liberal and liberating faith. He was the first to see what the Spirit was actually doing through that group! All honor to him for that!

Through Pentecost, the Spirit who united the Christians in a Fellowship, also separated them into a church. The sixth of Acts tells clearly enough for what humane reasons the church's organization was intensified. One finds no hint of apostolic succession, or things of that sort; and the sooner these are relegated to the limbo of ecclesiastical relics, the better it will be for Christianity. Neither does one find the distinction so many these days love to draw between "the church of the spirit" and the organized church; for that distinction is obviously futile and much of a half-truth.

What you do find is the inevitable. So essential is organization to the perpetuation of anything worth while, that the institutionalizing of the

Fellowship was bound to come. Necessity created the church. That was the only way to accomplish the big things that needed to be done. It was a great hour in history when the Christian church was born. It was a sad hour for mankind when the Christian church began to forget what it was born for!

One cannot be too trustful of tradition, but the story goes that the first approach to what we now would understand as a " church " appeared in Antioch, a city of repute, miles away on the Orontes. There " Jew " no longer had place. " Christian " was the word there! Not a very savory word at first, but still *the* word. And " Christian " it was with a will. Quaint, was it not, and prophetic, that this should have happened outside of Palestine?

IV

All the way through the career of Paul, Pentecost at once projected and protected the sense of fellowship in the church. This does not mean that Peter and Paul, Pentecost's strongest personalities, did not dissent on occasion. Neither does it mean that others, of less importance among them, lived faultlessly. There was many a disagreement, and, in the case of Paul, there was persecution by those of his fellow believers who could not keep step with his mind.

Alas for our human limitations! The early church saw many an embattled scene. One sometimes suspects that at Pentecost, the group as a group was spiritually far superior to its leaders and its members. We, who now take such pride in criticizing the church, might with some profit meditate upon that possibility even in our day! However that may be, we ought also to remember that the Spirit begets not uniformity but spontaneity. Yet these differences did not void their central verities. The unanimity with which certain ethical experiments were made by that Pentecostal group in the Spirit and Name of Jesus shows that in fellowship, though there is variety, there is also singular unity.

The group immediately became interested in the spiritual welfare of individuals. To onlookers, it seemed as if a new sort of folk had come into being. The power of that group was manifest in its ability, under God, to persuade increasing numbers to " stand before Jesus Christ in the attitude of reverent, obedient trust and of heartfelt devotion." They were eager that every last person might receive the benefits of " the deep things of God," which Jesus had brought to them.

The group, inspired of God, also became interested in the material welfare of its members. Were we not so familiar with the story, the total daring plan of ministering intimately and personally to the daily necessities and to the bodily welfare of its people would come home to us forcefully. No sooner had the Fellowship come into the possession of the Spirit than it began to extend its borders — to take in the life without, as well as the life within.

For this reason, the group became intensely interested in property. "We know," said John, in a practical and august moment, "that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." They began to put private property to collective uses for spiritual ends.

"And daily . . . in every house, they ceased not to teach . . . Jesus," thus inaugurating Christian religious education, in good tutorial fashion; with opportunity to nurture the young in faith in the Spirit, and to reach the adult mind as well.

Furthermore, the group put a new spirit into ethics. Jesus, for them, became an authority on, and the supreme authority in, life. More justice ought to be done the ethical note in the Pauline epistles; none can doubt its presence in the Petrine; Paul and Peter, being pentecostal men, took naturally to ethical endeavors. And James (it should be Jacob) wrote a flaming epistle that, despite Luther's distaste for it, has gone down in literature as a finer treatise on conduct than has ever been penned by the hand of man in any comparable space!

There is no telling just when the era of Pentecost came to an end. One might safely hazard a guess as to its proximate demise by noting when the Christian group lost its ethical enthusiasm, and began to waste its substance and spirit in riotous expectancy of the Lord's return. Paul himself fell victim to this for a spell. But he got over it. Sense will out!

V

Let us see how far we have come. Pentecost inaugurated the pentecostal; the day developed into an era. It was a collective religious experience, in which the revelation of the Spirit of Jesus was seen in and through the Fellowship. Whether or not it was emotional, we know that it was devotional; that the people corporately — and as we shall see, individually — dedicated themselves to the proposition that the Spirit of Jesus is the index and aim of God. Christianity, at Pentecost, was furthered by a group; God gave that group so clear an insight into the gospel that it began a long line of ethical adventures made in the Spirit of Jesus, the end of which is not yet.

CHAPTER V

PERSONAL RESULTS

I

IT is difficult to analyze an experience that was basically synthetic. One cannot nicely separate the personal benefits that accrued from Pentecost from the group experience in which they came. Yet this much must be said: Pentecost did make a vast difference in the individuals who composed the group. If one sought to state it quickly, one would say that Pentecost brought the disciples a new Christ and a new life. Let us examine this fact in more detail.

The spirit revealed a living Christ to the disciples. Heretofore, they had been looking back to Jesus; now they began looking up to him. God, they saw, was responsible for Jesus, and Jesus to them meant God, not in degree — for his words " My Father is greater than I " had not been lost on them — but in kind. And after all, that was all that mattered. They perceived that a living God of necessity meant a living Christ. It was with a queer mixture of heartache and joy that they came to say: " Even though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know him so no more." For now they knew him in the Spirit.

They could scarcely believe the resurrection, at first; now they saw how logical and inevitable it was. No dead Christ for them; he was alive; "could not be holden of death." Peter was ahead of the rest in catching the significance of Jesus. But it was not long before all of them had the same glad testimony to give: "With great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of Jesus."

In our day, not a few of us have found it more useful to our purposes to exalt a leader than to exhibit a spirit, and so we practice what comes to idolatry of Jesus. Not so back there. They gained an insight into Jesus that changed life for them. When they spoke of the Man with whom they had walked the Galilean roads, they meant that he was spiritually active in them, accomplishing things, making history. They may have been mistaken, it is true. But it is ridiculous to suppose that they thought of Christ merely as an influence. Like most words, "influence" is elastic, and you can stretch its meaning to cover a multitude of things; but as the word is in common use among us, the disciples had something more than "the gentle influence of a dead leader" in mind.

There simply is no equivalent in history for the idea of Jesus which, rightly or wrongly, they got. This is another bit of the uniqueness of Pentecost. They thought of him as a present and initiating participant in the spiritual affairs of themselves and of the Kingdom: " This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we are all witnesses. Being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this." In the same breath, they ascribed to Jesus the Pentecost they attributed to God!

II

That is to say, this living Christ was for them a cosmic Christ. They became convinced that Christ's activities were enriching every realm of life with spirituality. About the last thing they asked him was: " Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the Kingdom of Israel? " It was so hard for them to get rid of the idea that his ministry was to have immediate political results. But Pentecost changed all that for them. " God," they told folks, " sent him to bless you." They knew that, because that was just what had happened to them. " We are his witnesses," they said, " and so is the Holy Ghost."

God had linked Christ to their souls by his Spirit. They knew from personal experience that Christ was now carrying on exceptional transactions with men. For them " the fruits of the Spirit were the virtues of Christ," and the virtues of Christ were the index to God. Hence Christ was everywhere active in the realm of the Spirit. That is where he was to be looked for! And only there!

The stone which the builders rejected had indeed become the head of the corner. It has been well said that those people who came up to Pentecost came there, clinging to local patriotisms and partisanships, much as do most of those who from other lands come to ours, and much as do most of us who from this land go to others. But once they were in Christ they were no longer Parthians and Medes and Jews. They now came under the tongue of true Christian report. And the Spirit of Christ accounted for the change. To those people Jesus was not just one indication of the Eternal Spirit, but he was the incarnation of that Spirit. God had ever been like him, and like him he would ever be.

There was no living without Christ, provided one really wanted life. On this point, they were most emphatic. " Neither is there salvation in any other name," said Peter, " filled with the Holy Ghost," as he confronted the high priest and his kinsmen. And he added: " For there is none other name among men whereby we must be saved." Strong language, that! But those early Christians felt it was warranted.

III

Pentecost, furthermore, persuaded them that this living, cosmic Christ was inexhaustible. The wealth of his Spirit was at the disposal of all without stint or limit. They were curiously conscious — or was it so curious after all? — that they were not alone at their task, not even in their decisions. Another was with them. They were able to say a while later: " It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us." They felt that he was with them — this Unseen Presence, whose status came later to be put in a phrase, much over-worked by us, but vital to this point: " The Lord is the Spirit." When John Fletcher, centuries later, prayed: " O Lord, enlarge the vessel or withdraw thy Spirit," he put tersely the pentecostal discovery. Needless to say, the vessels were enlarged.

Endless elevation came to them from continuous contact with his Spirit. Heretofore they had been Christ's companions; now they were his incarnations. They were not just devotees; they were Christians. A Christ who lived God in them, and in whom they were " hid with God " ; whose activities were spiritual, universal, inexhaustible; it is he of whom the disciples at Pentecost became aware. This insight into the value of Jesus for all men came to them when his Spirit was given them.

The inexhaustible element in Christ brings us back again to the continual difficulty the people of Pentecost had in seeking to report the Jesus of their experience. Personal Pentecosts are as little reportable as collective ones. Indeed, those who have them all minutely figured out and catalogued, who with meticulous precision muster into line item after item of any religious experience, may well come under suspicion as having something short of the real thing. "Have you got religion?" asked the fanatic. "None to speak of!" said the saint — meaning, of course, that he had none to boast of. It is the infallible token of the truly pentecostal, whether in its personal or collective aspects, that it passes description, and always must:

"Lo, if some strange, intelligible thunder
Sang to the earth the secret of a star,
Scarce could ye catch, for terror or for wonder,
Shreds of the story that was pealed so far."[1]

Plato complained that philosophical truths can never really be communicated. Certain it is that spiritual truths never can. The language has not been born that can say it all.

[1] Frederic W. H. Myers, "Saint Paul," from *Collected Poems* (The Macmillan Company).

IV

Not only did Pentecost literally bring the disciples a new Christ, but it brought them a new life. It was, let us never forget, a new life lived in the power of the Fellowship. But a new life it was.

They came to be characterized by dynamic living. The gift of the Spirit brought them the gift of power. Those " fruits harvested by the Spirit," of which Goodspeed speaks, began to grow in their lives. This does not mean that they were moulded into uniformity. That, as Sylvester Horne descried a third of a century ago, has always been the church's most fatal dream. It has, indeed, been the most fatal dream of all religions.

It is a joy to go through Acts and to note how its author was fearful lest his readers should suppose that he was telling of a Spirit who " with one good custom " would corrupt the world. He cites instance after instance to show how various men got varying gifts from contact with the Spirit; and Paul, in his epistles, does the same. Neither is the Spirit " cribbed, cabin'd and confined " to one channel of operations.

But, though the incentives for initiative were greatly increased by their experience of Pentecost, and originality was given large place, and though they became known for their " boldness," and their logic took on an edge traceable to the deeper life they now led, they all, according to the measure that the Spirit possessed them, knew and showed "Love, Peace, Good Temper, Kindliness, Generosity, Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self-Control."[2] The Spirit adapts himself to our humanity, yet invariably adjusts our human nature to the mind of Christ.

No claim is made here that dynamic individual living comes only as the result of a Pentecost. Sometimes the one antedates the other. There are individual and intimate contacts with the Infinite that have social and spiritual consequences of immense proportions. Frequently, the master-souls who have been at the heart of movements that have most truly perpetuated Pentecost have had intimate spiritual experiences, with a definite sense of givenness. They are the sort Nietzsche, in a felicitous moment, described as "unhistorical" and "superhistorical." That is to say: They do not result from movements; movements result from them!

There can be no doubt that some persons are essential to Pentecosts. What happened to Peter in the garden, and to Thomas when he saw with his soul, undoubtedly helped prepare the way for the unction of the upper room. What happened to John Wesley in Aldersgate Chapel, or, more remarkable still, to Saint Francis just after he was crowned king of the revellers, undoubtedly gave them their stride toward the perpetuating of Pentecost. The question is not one of precedence: which comes first, the person or the Pentecost.

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[2] Goodspeed, *An American Translation of the New Testament,* 1923. Reprinted by permission of the University of Chicago Press.

It is one of effectiveness. Pentecost means a group which obtains the means and attains the ends of the Spirit of Christ. The individual baptism of the Holy Spirit works in one to work through one. A Pentecost works on a group to work through it. Mathematically, two and two make four; psychologically, nothing of the sort! Four together can do what four apart never can. As Deuteronomy sagely suggests, while one may chase a thousand, two can put ten thousand to flight. This is as it should be. And for those who are together some things can be done than can never be done for those who are apart!

Life is social to the core; it is impossible to realize one's best in isolation. The only use of aloneness is to make us useful. "No man liveth unto himself." Our highest attainments are dependent upon, and related to group life. The one sanction for solitude lies in solidarity. One only lives dynamically when one lives socially. The

" flight from the alone to the Alone " goes via humanity.

V

Their dynamic living was victorious living. They got the feeling that they won even when they lost! For, since they were with God, and God was with them, defeat was out of the question! They said: " The Holy Ghost and us " ; " reliance upon God brought them self-reliance." " The will to power," of which philosophers make so much, became at Pentecost the sense of power. They had the courage to stand up and be counted for the cause that centered in Christ. The day of Pentecost found " Peter, standing up with the eleven "; and I submit that there is poetry in that! Oh, but that was easy enough, one says. Anybody could do that, under the exaltation of the excitement. But once the news got out, once people " perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men " and the problem arose what the powers-that-were had best do with and to them, the test came. Could they stand up then? Well, Peter and John could: " Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye." You will recall that it was deemed incautious to " judge " them just yet; so they threatened them some more, and let them go.

They repaired to their fellows, and a prayer meeting was held then and there; and once again, in the bosom of the Fellowship, came that matchless awareness of power. " Great grace was upon them all " — they generally called power grace when they wanted to say that God gave it to them. It was not long before they found themselves in jail, and blood began to be shed; but there was victory in their souls. They " thanked God that they were counted worthy to suffer for the name "; and to the end, " with great power gave they witness." " Enable they servants," they prayed, " to proclaim thy message with fearless courage." That prayer was answered instantaneously!

Perhaps just because Christianity called for unwonted heroism, for the risking of goods and life, definite and costly experimentation for meeting human need, it came about that, for a time, " of the rest durst no man join himself to them." People have not been eager to stand in wrong; they have even been less anxious to carry on dangerous, if constructive, ethical experiments. Still, the church through the ages has never been quit of those who ventured to conduct themselves considerate of the needs of life, however inconsiderate others might be of them.

VI

In other words, their victorious living was venturesome living. “ In the power of his might,” they stopped short of nothing good. They thought it only becoming that they should “ turn the world upside down.” We have already seen that the Spirit gave them, not uniformity, but liberty. Their souls were set free from fear. But their minds also were made ready to receive new truth. So far as the disciples went, Pentecost was something new in religion. Nothing of the sort had happened to them before. Yet they did not shrink from the new. They rejoiced in it with an alacrity that shames most of us today.

A case could be made out that then and there Christianity commenced to be liberal. Unfortunately, it did not stay that way! In attaining religious experience, the seer succeeds where the scientist fails; but the seer fails with the best of experiences if he violates, in the slightest, that passion for veracity for which the scientist, up to date, has a better reputation than the seer. They saw that spirituality must be social, and acted accordingly.

Indeed, they had no choice in the matter! “ We cannot but speak,” they said. They were burdened with a message all simply had to know. They became gifted in testimony to a new way of life. They made it plain that what Joel had seen afar off had been realized through Jesus. In him lay the verification of the great prophets to whom, in their day, few had given ear, but many, stones: " This is that which was spoken by the prophet. . . . Saith God, I will pour out my Spirit . . . and they shall prophesy . . . and I will show wonders . . . and . . . whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. . . . Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God . . . ye . . . by wicked hands have crucified and slain. . . . This Jesus hath God raised up . . . he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. . . . Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus . . . both Lord and Christ."

Wade soul-deep through all the other evidence the New Testament contains; take into the reckoning all the variations of " kurios " (Lord); examine Pauline " theology "; but nowhere will you find a more succinct or outspoken connection of Jesus with the processes of Providence. When one considers that the entire New Testament is one in attributing to Jesus this tremendous significance, you see that here is an interpretation not lightly to be brushed aside. It may be disputed, but it cannot possibly be disregarded. Least of all by those who name the name of Christ.

But the most impressive part of this tremendous interpretation is the chances they took in the making of it, and the chances they took to make it the more! "They counted not their lives dear unto themselves," but ventured their all for Jesus. Pentecost developed "pioneer souls who blazed their paths where highways never ran."

I do not say that all the believers present on the day of Pentecost, nor even subsequently, personally attained this high view of Christ and this new view of life. There were those, no doubt, who never achieved it. But those who did began to regard Jesus as the alpha of the Spirit and the omega of prophecy, in whose light it was safe to walk, and through whom, in even our most dangerous adventures, we are "more than conquerors."

VII

Their new life in a Christ whom they now saw in a new light brought them some thrilling discoveries about character. When the Spirit controlled their careers, they took an unwonted interest in personality. But now no longer primarily in their own. Joseph de Maistri is reported to have said that he did not know what a scoundrel's soul might be, but he knew well what the soul of a good man consisted of, and it was horrid. The disciples saw deeper. They knew what the soul of a Spirit-filled man consisted of, and it was glorious! And more. They knew what the soul of a sinner consisted of, and it was challenging, because of what the Spirit could do with it. The early Christians were connoisseurs of character! Their faith in personality knew no bounds.

It is a bit difficult for us to work ourselves back to that day and to appreciate the tremendous change that came over them in regard to personality. They had been most delinquent upon this score. So delinquent had they been that even Jesus, who well knew what manner they were, was amazed at their indifference to the common good. But the Spirit lifted them " out of the noisy sickroom of themselves."

" We cannot gain this life by perpetual contemplation of our own faults or of our own merits, by the elaborate business of ' taking thought ' which the Confessional too often encourages and Jesus always forbids. Healthy organisms are concerned with their ends, not with their processes." [8] We are most ourselves when we are most self-forgetful. We never discover what is in us until we put all there is in us into some challenging task. The disciples became saints by seeking to make others saints.

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[8] Charles E. Raven, *The Quest of Religion* (Richard R. Smith, Inc.).

The life of the unsatisfied self, writes Professor Hocking, has been discovered by the psychologists. Perhaps so; one wonders! But the life of the unsatisfactory selves has been discovered by religion; and the spiritually minded have always felt that it is their task to do something about it. They greatly fear making the distinction between impeccability and infallibility, Roman Catholic theology to the contrary notwithstanding.

That God uses sinful men to convey infallible truth may be so; Protestants have their doubts. Their chief concern is not the stating of fact; it is the impartation of power. Impartation, mark; not private possession for private purposes. Saints are minus conceit, and plus sympathy. Paul did not march up Mars Hill with sneers for religious views. He was divinely diplomatic only because he was genuinely in accord with their spiritual aspirations. He utilized the belief they had to reveal the faith they could have. Spirit-led folks always act this way: "There is no light in souls in which there is no warmth." Power to beget power; personality to produce personality, it is this that Pentecost brought to those whose lives it hid with God in Christ.

CHAPTER VI

SHALL PENTECOST BE PERPETUATED?

I

SO far, we have striven to indicate that Pentecost has the distinctive quality of initiating the power whereby a holy people is thrust forth on purpose to achieve the ethical outcome of the Spirit of Christ. A number of the details of its procedure will be commented on in the following chapters. This is as good a place as any to ask, now that we have the general characteristics of Pentecost in mind, whether it ought to be perpetuated; whether Pentecost, in this year of our Lord, could do Christendom any good.

At this point, we need to remind ourselves that we are not tracing the record of the work of the Holy Spirit in history. That is eminently worth doing and has been ably done. The achievements of the Spirit in the worship of the church, in its mysticism, its sacraments, the Bible, art, architecture, music, the missionary movement, the scientific attitude, the social conscience — not to exhaust the list — is a tale tremendously worth the telling and hearing; and no Christian will wish to get on without at least some general knowledge of it. To no such ambitious task have we here set our hand. Convinced that the operations of the Spirit are neither confined to, nor revealed in any one line of activity, there is still the fact that Pentecost had and has a major place in the ongoings of Providence.

II

Please to observe that we are not asking: Has Pentecost ever been duplicated? In religion, as in nature, quality and quantity are frequently intertwined. We know that in the original Pentecost, the spiritual revelation had numerical results. But must a Pentecost always operate similarly? When the dynamic of God so charges a group that it sets itself enthusiastically to the carrying out of the implications of the Spirit of Jesus — for this is what Pentecost was — is variety inadmissible?

If the variants were in other combinations than those Acts has familiarized us with, would we know it for what it was? When a Hale sent a Bunyan to jail, it was not because one was a Christian, and the other was not; but because the judge was unable to judge the variants that appeared in the prisoner. He did not see the good of the new in Bunyan. This is a feeble illustration of our inability to recognize the irregular for what it is worth. Accordingly, it is possible that Pentecost has been duplicated, or is being duplicated now, without our having the remotest idea of it! Perhaps it will take a Pentecost of no small proportions to clear our minds of the notion that Pentecost can come only in a way we already understand!

We should be cautious in passing judgment on reputed Pentecosts; to us, they may only seem spiritual irregularities and extraneous irrelevancies. If it should be noised about that in an upper room, or some dungeon, a new Pentecost is under way, let us have enough of the open mind to appreciate the possibility and probability of the originality of the operations of the Spirit!

III

When, therefore, we talk about perpetuating Pentecost, we are thinking, not of high-pressure moments, but of high-powered motives. Are there any "infallible signs and sure tokens" by which they may be recognized?

Yes! There is, for one thing, the yardstick of cooperative consecration. In Pentecost the human and the divine are always peculiarly combined. You cannot deal with a Pentecost as if it were wholly divine. Neither can you reckon with it as if it were entirely human. It was both. It was a spiritual event in and through human life. There could have been no Pentecost had there been neither Peter nor people. This observation seems too inane to be made! Yet it needs to be stressed that it was the concerted cooperation with, as well as the collective consciousness of God that made Pentecost possible.

It is hard enough to " draw . . . the mystic line, severing rightly His from thine, which is human, which divine." It is even more difficult to estimate aright the tremendous totality of an event in which both God and the godly are so thoroughly involved. Christ's observation that " that which is born of the Spirit is spiritual," gives us genuine help at this point. Any event that begets the kind of life which characterized that Fellowship while Christ had his will of it, truly perpetuates Pentecost.

Pentecosts originate in the determination, on the part of groups, to take Jesus as their authority. Whatever may have been the case at the first, those events in which Pentecost has since been perpetuated came, not as planned Pentecosts, but as the by-product of Christian living. These groups were thrust forth inspired to reproduce and produce the life of the Spirit of Jesus, at the cost of standing, property, kin and life, not because they had sat down beforehand and said: Let us go to now, and be another Pentecost! Once in a great while, but really too infrequently to mention, there was something resembling the upper-room setting or scene of the original. But usually, there was a Pentecost before they knew it.

All they did was this: They put themselves entirely under the influence of the Spirit of Jesus. That is what they did. This is all they did. All they did after that was to be traced back to this. Then, with a holy surprise, they discovered that the Spirit functioned in the Fellowship, and " sat upon each of them." It was inevitable that a group which had the gift of the Spirit of God should be inwardly impelled to go out to impart its good to those it was able to reach.

To put it in the striking phrase of the New Testament, " if we live in the Spirit " we are bound to " walk in it."

IV

Before we ask whether Pentecost ought to be perpetuated we had better ask whether it ever has been. Have any groups been willing so to possess the Spirit of Jesus that significant spiritual history was made by and in them?

It is noteworthy that the Christian church, since Pentecost, has never known a Pentecost *en masse*. This was to be expected, if for no other reason than its divisiveness. The church, all too soon, left the religion of life for the religion of the mind. It shrunk its soul in its brain. It quit the Galilean simplicity and embraced an assortment of views that fitted in, at the time, with the worlds of Greece and Rome. Extenuating circumstances for all this there were; still, this is what happened to the church. Pentecost is always impossible when the church dallies with paganism!

What is worse, the church early lost its passion for fellowship. It became exclusive, monarchial, hierarchial. No longer was it " with one accord." That was equivalent to putting an end to Pentecost. The church became rich, and then powerful. That happened to the Roman Catholic church, the Greek church, the Protestant. Every major branch of Christendom abused power almost the moment it got it. There was simply no Pentecost in that.

And the church became individualistic. The papacy, with its mania for domination, went a long way toward deleting the social concept in the common mind. So did the Greek church, with its insufferable passion for prestige. What they left undone, the Reformers finished. They made religion so purely personal as to make it impurely Christian. Great gain came from the Reformation, but this individualistic attitude threatened, and still threatens, to be the end of Protestantism.

The "Agape," the love feast, of the early Christians soon went; but the Lord's Supper remained. With many alterations, yet with much similarity, the Feast of the Fellowship, the Holy Communion, was retained among virtually all Christians; but the Fact of Fellowship went by the board.

V

If the church has never been in a position to perpetuate Pentecost, groups within it have. Yet groups have often tried and failed! What accounted for their failure?

On the face of it Montanism was pentecostal. Montanus, the prophet of Pepuza, was much of a man. In giving the authority of the Spirit precedence over the authority of the Scriptures, and in protesting against the growing worldliness of the church, he and his followers gave a good account of themselves. It looked for all the world as if here were a group in which the Spirit of Jesus might have free course and be glorified. But the promise of the movement was inhibited by the emotional excesses of its founder and its followers.

Or consider the Anabaptists. They were not wanting in men whose souls the Spirit had. Here might have been a real Pentecost! One feels like removing one's hat whenever the name of Hubmaier is named. He and his martyr wife were out for holy living. "The deformation of the Reformation," which Luther's betrayal of the peasants had wrought at a single stroke, was enough to stir the soul of any saint! The social idealism of these Anabaptists, the belief in the separation of church and state, the conviction that religion cannot and must not be compelled, were all of them splendid enough; and they take on additional glory when one recalls that for these convictions they were burned, drowned, and massacred, and their heads hung out in cages swinging from a cathedral tower!

Yet for all this the movement failed of a Pentecost. This, for the simple reason that its ethics came so far short of the Spirit of Jesus. Its devotees were literalists; and whenever folks are that, some, if not most, are certain to make certain Old Testament ethics their own. So came polygamy and resort to force. The latter went far to retard democracy. Their excesses so frightened the Lutherans that these began to ask for territorial churches in control of princes and magistrates, as the one way of remaining free from Rome — and that proved to be slavery to, for the sake of freedom from. With the Anabaptists, as with the Montanists, there was too little reliance upon genuinely spiritual processes for a Pentecost to result.

Quakerism and Methodism succeeded in perpetuating Pentecost where these came "so near, and yet so far." The Quakers too "trembled with emotion," as the Montanists had done before them; so much so that their very name reflects the feelings they had. They too hated formalism and coldness in religion. Nor were they without human foibles; for from the first there has been about the pentecostal an erratic element, just because it is as human as it is. They were not kind to beauty, and though they have exerted a greater influence than their numerical strength would indicate, their lack of full-time leadership has been a sad mistake. True, their founder was one of whom they might well be proud; yet no prouder than the Montanists might have been of Montanus; for both were "religious, inward, solid, and observing beyond their years."

You must judge the difference between Montanists and Quakers by the ratio of reliance upon the wholly spiritual processes. The Spirit of Jesus dominated Quaker life in almost untrammeled fashion for a good while after its birth. There was in Quakerism an appreciation of spiritual processes, an exaltation of personality, a recognition of the sacramental nature of life itself that was in direct contradiction of Montanist ecstaticism, passivity, and escape from reality. The Montanists had the hysteria that breaks down moral fibre; the Quakers had the mysticism that strengthens it. "I live," said George Fox, when asked to take command of some troops in Cromwell's army, "in the virtue of that life and power that takes away the occasion of all wars." Which was one way of testifying that Quakerism perpetuated Pentecost.

That was true of the Wesleyan movement. There too the human traits would out. Organization, undone in Quakerism, was overdone in Methodism. The scourge is still upon it! Yet the extravagances of the Anabaptists were not tolerated in Methodism. Emotion was a big factor with both, but the Wesleyans kept it ethical. Their revival was joyous; it feared force; and it saved a civilization! Methodism perpetuated Pentecost as the Anabaptist group could not. (From the similarity of names, no one should suppose that the Baptists these days give less convincing evidence of spirituality than others.)

These instances could be duplicated. And in each case we would see that these groups perpetuated Pentecost to the degree that they relied upon the spiritual confidences and processes that characterized Jesus. For the purpose of the Spirit in Pentecost was, and always must be, to bring groups into such fellowship with God that the ethics of Jesus — "The Jesus way of life" — will come to them naturally. No one is justified in calling any event pentecostal which does not clearly involve the readjustment of values Christward, an indifference to personal aggrandizement, and an intense enthusiasm for collective good. Pentecost is perpetuated whenever a group gets the spiritual power to have fealty to fellowship, life-wide concern for personality and courage to adjust the ordinary affairs of life to the extraordinary insight given by the Spirit of Jesus.

VI

Pentecost has been perpetuated by groups busy with ethical rather than with doctrinal affairs. Had one gone up to these groups and suggested that their interest lay in ethics rather than in doctrine, they would have wondered what that suggestion meant. When the Spirit energized them, ethics naturally followed. That was the simple sequence. Religion is energy, not ethics; yet religion, and especially the Christian, inevitably produces them. When character was transformed, conduct was instantly altered. That stood to reason. For them it was all simple enough.

It is only as one stands off at a distance, and views Kingdom-history, that one is impressed with the fact that concern for conduct rather than concern for creed possessed the groups that have proved pentecostal. The spiritual temperature fell so soon as folks felt more their need for argument than their need for fellowship. Jealousy for justice to minorities causes many to side with the Arians against Athanasius and his followers; not because the Arians were right, for they were not, but because the group that was more right than they — both reasoned a deal from false premises — showed so little of the Spirit of Christ toward those whom it opposed. Yet the whole Arian episode, pro and con, only made trouble for Christianity; and gave the church as bad a three centuries of it as it has ever known.

There are instances, to be sure, where doctrinal emphasis resulted in spiritual advance. But not many! Even the Reformation failed conspicuously of the pentecostal. It was too political to be truly spiritual. On almost every pentecostal score: obedience to the Spirit and faith of Jesus, enthusiasm for the Fellowship of believers, internationalism, social-mindedness, concern for the daily welfare of others, the Reformation registered minus. It enunciated doctrines with a sureness and clarity that thrill us to this day, and that made mighty contributions to the religious life. Nor should it be forgotten that the Reformation is censured for things it was merely the victim of, such as the trend toward individualism, which is usually, but mistakenly, charged up to it. Yet for all its contributions, the Reformation had little of that spiritual purity which made pentecostal groups the power for God they were.

Calvinism was not without its ethics, but it was preponderantly doctrinal. It was not until Calvinism became puritanical — in the true sense of that word — that much good came of it. Even at that, its good was far from the best. The witches run to mind! One wonders, however, whether the church of the present is any better off than the church of the past, at least in this regard. Back there it was all the fashion to get after those who differed doctrinally; now it is customary to take out our spleen on those who differ ethically.

But while " heresies " incited the church's thought, Pentecosts increased the church's life. Church historians fail to do this fact justice. They confuse the large with the important, or have their eyes so fastened on the prominent that they fail to see the significant. It would be ridiculous to say that spiritual progress was not furthered by the Renaissance, the Reformation, or even the French Revolution; but it would be equally ridiculous to say that in these movements, or in any like them, the pentecostal was attained. That was attained only by smaller and less noted groups; and virtually all these larger movements were diffusions, outgrowths, results of the power begotten in and by such groups.

They went to the heart of things. They cared more for love than for facts, much as they cared for these; and saw that to make love secondary to truth was to play as false to the deepest facts of life as it would be to question the ultimate unity of love and truth. They felt that life in the Fellowship of the Spirit is at once the highest individual attainment and the paramount social contribution one can hope to make.

Consider a few of these groups. There was Peter Waldo. He was rich. Contact with Christ altered his scale of values. He became the center of a group that waited for God, and on God. He hurled both his wealth and himself against an avalanche of sin. He was especially solicitous for the poor and defenseless "whom the church taxed when they were orthodox, and burned when they were heretics." He developed a relish for stewardship. His methods may have been mistaken, but the principle of the man was superb! He wanted everyone to hear the gospel in his own tongue. His group had similar considerateness for the unprivileged. The Waldenses by means of lay-preaching, exerted a continent-wide influence. Nor was theirs the work of a day. It lasted. We are not quit of its influence to this day, whereof we are glad.

There was John Hus. You will have to search long to find a name with more glory packed into it! And deservedly so. His manliness and his martyrdom have impressed the centuries. But never man was humbler! He kept asserting that not to any one individual, but to the Fellowship, the Spirit would reveal the truth. His group — the Hussites — were not particularly concerned with doctrines. Life came first. Hus himself had stressed church reform, and his followers — poor folks at first, intellectuals afterwards — espoused the cause of the peasantry at a time when the clergy owned one-third of the soil! Those Bohemian Brethren fraternalized and humanized religion at a time when the hierarchy was dehumanizing it inordinately. Personally, I feel that the Hussite movement was the nearest thing to a Pentecost Christendom has seen since the original. When church history ebbs, and Kingdom history comes into its own, Hus and his Hussites may well outclass Luther and his Reformation. At least, we do not everlastingly have to be making apologies for Hus as we have to do for Luther!

There was Meister Eckhart, greatest of "The Friends of God." Again, a singularly superior spirit; and again, by him and by them, the constant crying out for inwardness in religion, for the primacy of experience, for the gift of God in and through a group, for a return to the ideals Jesus lived. They too " builded better than they knew," which is what usually happens when folks build the best they know.

And to come to a more recent time, Frances Willard reports that " the Pentecost of God descended " when those women of Hillsboro, Ohio, December 23, 1873, " started something," that began the Woman's Christian Temperance Union crusades and ended the dominance of the liquor traffic among men.

Groups that wanted conduct Christianized rather than opinion corrected have perpetuated Pentecost throughout the Christian era. Generally, these groups were made to feel none too welcome in the church, and for a few of them, alas, the church had no room at all.

VII

Nineteen centuries have come out of eternity since Pentecost. During this time, Pentecost has not been " repeated "; there was no need for that. But it has, on occasion, been perpetuated. Not by the church as a whole. " Can we suppose," asks one recent student, " that the Church will ever do much more than it has done to moralize men? . . . We are gradually working out a better moral code than men have hitherto held; and the Christian churches seldom offer us leadership in this momentous undertaking." Can we also suppose that the church will ever do more than it has done to spiritualize society? One thing is sure: Unless the church gets more of the pentecostal power, more of honesty and social concern and inwardness revealed in its corporate life, " Ichabod " may be written on its doors, for then its days will be numbered!

Such perpetuating as has been done has been done by groups; groups that saw new light in, and got new power from Christ; in whom the Spirit came to collective expression; groups inspired, and then thrust forth, with the hearty consent of those thrust, to achieve deliberately the ethical results of the Spirit of Christ. Do not look for Pentecost to come in a mob. Look for it to come in a group, which has corporately and consciously given Christ pre-eminence in its life.

That which is born of the Spirit is a yearning for the spiritual. A Christian, it has well been said, is less concerned for his spiritual success than for the success of the spiritual. One suspects that some who pray for the coming of a Pentecost have an unworthy type in mind; one that will give them personal, spiritual or emotional enrichment. They are not eager for that reign of righteousness which, by means of God-endowed groups, will change the ethical climate of the race. They want Pentecost to come in ways they can approve. If it comes in ways contrary to their wishful thinking they would neither desire nor recognize it.

Too many of us are looking for a punier Pentecost at a moment when we sorely stand in need of a greater. We ought to understand, once and for all, that a personal Pentecost can never be a private one. Always, Pentecost is social. Perpetuating Pentecost is the task of conserving the ethical spontaneity of religion; of keeping it strong, creative, joyful. Social concern must come back into our spiritual fellowships. We need to become so alive to the presence and Spirit of God that, with a fine scorn of consequence, we shall speak up for the unpopular and the misunderstood, and shall reinterpret a neglected Christ in such power that folks shall feel that all is not well with them until they come to terms with him.

Pentecost has been a day; it must be a dynamic; it has been a memory, it must be a movement "ambitious for spiritual endowments . . . to excel in ways that will do good to the church."[1] So shall we perpetuate Pentecost by placing the control of power in the hands of the Spirit.

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[1] Goodspeed, *An American Translation of the New Testament,* 1923. Reprinted by permission of the University of Chicago Press.

PART TWO

CHAPTER VII

PENTECOST AND PREACHING

I

THE moment they were Spirit-filled, the apostles leaped into preaching. This was pre-eminently true of Peter. Argument had always been to his taste, and, from the start, he had been a rugged, if somewhat heady, controversialist. Pentecost made him a preacher. So far as we know, he had done nothing of the sort before — though there is a remote possibility that, when the disciples went out two by two, he had done a little of it. Heretofore, when they had gone out to witness for Jesus, they had not made out very well. But now, with the support of the Spirit, and with the " feel " of the Fellowship which, then and there, was forming, he stood up to *preach* Jesus. All history has been different since then.

The record likely gives us but a suggestion of his remarks that day. Availing himself of a ridiculous charge of drunkenness that was being made, he offered his explanation of that which was coming to pass by quoting the prophet Joel. Not that this was the first time that Joel's words had come true. Oh, no! Had their eyes been open, they would have seen their fulfilment in Jesus while yet he was in their midst. Had he not worked wonders and spoken them? And here — right now — he was evident once again, " this Jesus, whom ye crucified." The Messiah, of whom David had sung as had no other poet, had met death at their hands. But God was not to be put off in any such way! *They* might be through with Jesus, but God was not. God could not permit the death of Jesus, and be God! " It was not possible that he should be holden of it." He was alive, and we here — asserted Peter — testify to his resurrection. Well had David, prophet that he was, said that, come what may, there would be no death for the Messiah. Some of you still stand here, thinking that David is next to God. We, who experience Jesus, know better; and, needless to say, David does. Jesus is at the right hand of power. And to a good purpose. He is utilizing the power of God to bring you to your senses spiritually. In some such strain as this, Peter argued his case at Pentecost.

II

If we wish to perpetuate Pentecost; if, in other words, we wish our people to be so Spirit-filled that their dominant purpose will be the securing of the ethical results of the Spirit of Jesus, we shall have to have more Petrine preaching.

The following, at least, may be said for his preaching:

1. The spirit in which he preached went a long way toward making it possible for him to utter hard truths so effectively that decent people were offended at themselves rather than at the preacher.

2. He made an immediate explanation of an immediate event to meet an immediate need. He did not have time to prepare his address. He did not have, as do most preachers now, a good working library, an authentic cross-reference system or a modern filing case. Had he had these, they could have served him but little then. What he did, he had to do quickly.

3. He spoke in phrases intelligible to them. The words he used were familiar. If he quoted Scripture but loosely to force home his point, or if he made points that are none to us now, that only means that his speech was contemporaneous. From his introduction to the last phrase, he made his appeal in thought-forms that left no doubt as to his meaning in the minds of those who heard.

4. He delivered his message in terms of their religious experiences up to date. This does not mean that he neglected the past. It does mean that he neglected the outworn. " Prophet " and

" Lord " were not only words to conjure with, but they were the very words in the light and hope of which the devout Jew lived his religious life. He did not introduce things extraneous to Jewry. He appealed for Jesus as a Jew to Jews.

5. He made a Christian interpretation of new religious phenomena. If he did not get all of Christianity into his message, he got enough of it in to create a real longing for Christ and Christ's way of life in the souls of his hearers.

6. Many responded in hearty fashion to Peter's open-souled appeal. And when they did, Peter was ready for them. He told them, simply and concretely, what they were to do. And they did it!

III

It may not be altogether fair to compare our preaching with that of Peter. The environment is different. We do not always have a curious or expectant group to which to talk. But before we argue this let us make sure that our spirit toward our work has some kinship to Peter's. Many of us go at preaching with a superior air. Have we not been educated especially for this, and should not some deference be shown us because of our expertness? We demand a respect the world of today will not give, nor take away once we have earned it!

We seem unable to grasp the fact that even preaching has come under the reign of Demos. The danger is that we shall make the word of God of none effect through our conceit.

This is especially likely to be true with those who are ministers of large or prosperous churches. They do not realize, often enough, that the biggest church is not necessarily the greatest, nor do they ponder sufficiently how easy it is to mistake a mole-hill of emotion for the mountain of evangelism. The ado made by many a prominent pastor about his statistical record would lead one to think that it follows from an increase in numbers that the Kingdom is being advanced, when it may mean nothing more than that the standards have been lowered sufficiently for the spiritually callous to be attracted. When success ministers to our conceit, instead of helping us to humility, our preaching may be popular, but it will never be pentecostal.

Then there is the moral hazard that comes with being professionally engaged in promoting spirituality. This is a very real one, all the more so because our professional privileges tend to bar us from the fruitful democracy of the Fellowship, until, for us, it becomes just an empty pretense to say: "We have access through the Son by one Spirit." The old counsel Saint Francis gave his young friend needs to resound in our ears: "It is of no use, my son, to walk anywhere to preach unless we preach everywhere as we walk!"

Even in our preaching, professionalism comes to smite us. We studiously seek to manifest our intellectual prowess, when the crying need is for the exhibition of the Spirit of Jesus. And not infrequently it eventuates that the higher we go in the ministry, the lower we go in character; and that, when we are "drest in a little brief authority" our fervor for fellowship evaporates. Thus, as Dr. Gordon once described it, we "have substituted the mill-round for the sun-path."

And if our spirit is often wrong because we do not love love enough, our spirit is also often wrong because we do not love truth enough. It was said of the late Wayne B. Wheeler that he never lost a case in the United States Supreme Court because the judges knew beforehand that he would never make a misstatement to them if it was humanly preventable. Our congregations ought to be equally sure. It would be worth writing out our sermons word for word just to achieve that! A passion for accuracy shall have to possess us, if our preaching is to be taken in earnest.

But a lot of our preaching fails to be pentecostal because we are broken in spirit. The injustice of a bishop, the inconsiderateness of a church, the indifference of a community, the iniquity of financial want, all these may serve to crush us. And then there are our doubts! Anything, from mechanism to humanism, may have wrought the mischief, including a not inconsiderable doubt as to the value of preaching itself. The old confidence has gone, and with it the joy of preaching, and the power to bring folks God. We still feel that there is something there which they and we need, and so our preaching becomes wistful, but it is no longer dynamic. We would give anything if only once we could be sure again!

If only there could be some way to recapture our power without relinquishing our intelligence. " Truth " should have set us free, but, instead, it has left us feeble! And that shows in our preaching. We talk commonplaces, and resort to sensationalism, and buttress in mild fashion standards good people already are for, with both hands up. But the verities and ventures of the Spirit are far from us.

Someone has told of a church, where the minister on entering faces this painted challenge: " Sir, we would see Jesus." Would it help any were these words placed over the entrances to our seminaries, or wherever preachers assemble for conferences, or teachers of religion sit in council? The consciousness that Jesus is not to be seen much in our spirits or our minds or our lives is driving even

Protestant preachers into "retreats." Unfortunately, even in these, the ecclesiastical machinery continues to grind.

The nearest approach to the real article the writer has seen was a regional conference in which members of the Methodist Federation for Social Service shared the event with those of other folds. Even there, however, pre-occupation with ethics almost excluded consideration for energy. One thought of those New Testament words: "The Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." We need nothing quite so much as groups in which preachers can be inspired to make ethical adventures and advances through the possession and power of the Spirit of Christ.

IV

Then there was the immediacy of Peter's preaching. Of course, that does not mean that we can omit preparation. But it does mean that too many of our sermons are selected rather than compelled. Our barrels and our homiletical habits betray us. Pentecost is not going to be perpetuated unless we feel more frequently that this sermon now is our chance to help someone through to God. It will mean that we will less frequently preach on subjects we are selfishly fond of, and more frequently on themes that come to us from a prayerful knowledge of and consideration for the spiritual condition of our people.

Where, as in the Episcopalian and Lutheran folds, a church-year is followed, preachers are delivered from the dangers of promiscuity. Over against that, however, is the fact that thus they are delivered into the hands of an automatic scheme that tends to destroy spontaneity and modernity.

Some preacher might wing his way into immortality by excogitating a life-year to take the place of a church-year. Even that, however, would have to be constantly revised, in order to be congenial to adjustability. If we ministered to our people as intelligently as physicians or occulists do with their complete records of their patients, we might know enough about our people to preach up to their needs.

The trouble is that many preachers are belated. They got started in some place where a preacher could get on fairly well with few brains. It was one thing to preach where and when the scientific spirit was scarcely discernible. But today one is badly off who has what Dean Brown described as " Ellis Island regulations to keep out ideas." One of the sure signs of the rising tide of protest against small talk in the pulpit is that eloquence is losing caste. People are beginning to realize what sins are committed in the name of pulpit oratory. The man who preaches out of his "barrel" with little thought for the young folks, who return from college dedicated either to the proposition that wisdom shall die with them, or that it has already died, announces trumpet-tongued (be his voice ever so mild) that he has not heard the news. One who develops his text rather than his hearers is "spending his labor for that which satisfieth not."

Immediacy! Timeliness! These must be our concern. Our people come to church predisposed to listen, always secretly hoping we shall have something to say. Strange how tenaciously that hope persists! And they hope we shall have something to say that will fit the spiritual occasion now on hand. There was a rugged honesty about Peter. In that sermon of his, he busied himself, in no small part, with their interpretation of Scripture. Whether or not his interpretation was faultless, his motive was!

What is Protestantism suffering from? What has it suffered from for at least a generation? An evasion of the truth! Of course, we have had a plausible excuse. We did not want to disturb our people needlessly. The pulpit, after all, is the place for life's positives. And that is right. If permitting ignorance to confuse and blight the minds of our people is one of the great positives, we were in order. But is it? Cannot a scholarly attitude toward scriptural interpretation go with a passion for the redemption of men, and go in the same breath, as it did in the case of Peter? Of course it can! But in our day that takes a deal more of preparation and prayer than the type that unsettles no one.

There ought to be an utter honesty about preachers, an honesty which is other and finer than the brutal frankness which makes so many of us forget to "speak the truth in love." I was in a group of ministers, convened for the purpose of making the church more life-wide and spiritually minded. The charge was brought that some of us have Mammonized Christ! It was alleged that we use the name of Christ for that god whose spirit is consonant with the social control of our day. The discussion was significant. It would be nice to be able to report that no one arose to the defense of Mammon. But that cannot be done.

There was the prospect of a real clarifying of our concepts of Christ. But just at this point, one brother began a moving recital of how, forty-two years before, God for Christ's sake had forgiven him his sins. He was followed by others, who testified of their respective conversions. Then somebody started a hymn, and off we were to the delightful realm of devotion. All of which was good enough, but not any of which was appropriate enough! Gone was the searching of our souls to see whether we were acquiescing in anti-Christian attitudes in the name of Christ. Here was a group of preachers, " rationalizing " with an evident sense of relief! When we let reverence for Jesus ward off the reality about Jesus we nullify the word of God through our devotions. In ways such as these, it is possible for us to be devoutly dishonest! Happy that preacher who does not permit enthusiasm about Jesus to shut out the truth about him.

V

Closely akin to this matter of timeliness is that of intelligent speaking. Peter did that; and we know from his writings exactly how Paul felt about it. Whatever else the people at Pentecost heard, they most certainly did understand, " every man in his own tongue." If one were to catalogue the sins of the preachers of our day, these would certainly be among them:

1. An inordinate tendency to generalization and a resultant inability to hold judgment in suspense;
2. The attempt to override the judgment of others by authoritative pronouncements;
3. The use of eloquence to create emotional

situations which our spiritual message is too thin to integrate;

4. The lack of balance between the clever and the true; inconsistency and inconstancy of concept;

5. Befuddling our own minds and those of our hearers by the use of words and the construction of sentences and the deadness of our " skeletons."

Many high capacity preachers yield but low performance because their language limps. They dig the graves for their sermons the while they give them birth! While it is entirely true that " grace is more than grammar . . . and to win your hearers you may break every pulpit convention," the fact remains that even so humble an item as grammar may " help folks on to God," or bar out the spiritual.

I once heard William Jennings Bryan speak at New York University. He told how as a young man he often made speeches in churches. A favorite text of his was: " The prudent man foreseeth the evil and hideth himself, but the fool goeth on his way and is punished." He told us that whenever he quoted that, folks looked just as blank as we did then! He wondered why, and finally it came to him. He decided to simplify his Scripture. Now, instead of saying: " The prudent man foreseeth the evil and hideth himself, but the fool goeth on his way and is punished," he said: " The wise man gets it in the head; the fool gets it in the neck," and everybody knew what he was talking about! Charles Kingsley advocated a tax on long words! While it will never do to sacrifice accuracy for brevity, it would advantage our preaching could we but bear the latter in mind.

A preacher is a person who, by means of public address, is able so well to bring the good news of the fulness of life as to change all of its spirit. A preacher is an emancipator. It is less his ability to speak, than his ability to speak men free that is the genius of his craft. Many of our sermons are not good enough to excite the active interest of our hearers, nor are they bad enough for them to question our orthodoxy! They are not good enough to make men think, nor bad enough to make men sleep. In a sense other than the Scripture intended, our people endure as seeing the invisible. They are sure there must be some point to the sermon, but for the life of them they cannot tell what it is all about.

Our fathers felt that sermons had best be theological. The present generation of preachers feels that sermons had best be logical — especially as a defense mechanism against emotion. To them a good sermon is like a legal brief: it must come out on all fours. The truth probably is that sermons should not be theological, nor logical, but psychological. To be sure, these three are not necessarily exclusive. All that is required is that people shall receive intelligent insight spiritually from our preaching.

VI

If, as one innocent bystander observes, many preachers " labor under the impression that the banality of their remarks may be hidden under a large use of the chancel voice," it is also true that most communities have in them brethren who excel in superficialities, and who do a large business on small intellectual capital by watering their homiletical stocks. Furthermore, it is so lovely to be a priest; so lonely to be a prophet. Hence preaching tends to be narcotic rather than dynamic. " Comfort ye, comfort ye my people," comes to be the favorite rationalization for the sort of preaching we do; we have little appetite to " speak to the heart of Jerusalem," at least to the extent of telling Jerusalem how heartless as yet it really is. So the preacher with the priestly mind comes to despise the prophetic grind.

All of which is by way of saying that we need to take seriously the spiritual aspirations of our generation. Peter did that. It is so easy to say that this is a godless generation. Well, if it is, our preaching may have something to do with that.

It is a generation that finds it difficult to get God straight in its thinking, and consciously active in its living. It would be presumptuous to suppose that writers like Walter Lippmann speak for the people. One does not every day encounter such a choice bit as this: " No doubt there are passages in the Scriptures written by highly cultivated men in which the Divine nature is called mysterious and unknowable. But these passages are not the rock upon which the popular churches are founded. No one, I think, has truly observed the religious life of simple people without understanding how plain, how literal, how natural they take their supernatural personages to be."[1] Here we have a spiritual infantilism; a man who, on other scores, gives abundant evidence of intellectual maturity, looking at people's religion with the eyes of a six-year-old; denying that others can see, because his own eyes are holden. If there is one thing scientific researchers in religion, like Otto and Thouless and Ames, have found; and if there is one thing the preacher, in daily contact with his people, knows, it is that the sense of the divine mystery grips and lures folks ever!

Being no lover of airtight consistency this writer goes on to say that " A frustration in the inner life . . . will persist so long as the leaders of thought speak of God in more senses than one."[2] He is not the only person who has trouble trying to carry more than one big idea at a time. That it frustrates *his* inner life is entirely evident. But he must not therefore seek to prevent pentecostal personalities from speaking of God in at least as many ways as it is humanly possible to speak of Christ. It is by a sound instinct that one of the world's great religion exalts the ninety-nine most beautiful names, for there are at least that many beautiful ideas. How can one speak of the Incomprehensible in but one sense, so long as one speaks intelligently of the facts clearly on hand?

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[1] Walter Lippmann, *A Preface to Morals* (The Macmillan Company).

It is setting up straw men to make such statements as these: "The religion of the spirit . . . is not concerned with the organization of matter, but with the quality of human desire."[3] For it all depends upon what one means by "the organization of matter." It is part and parcel of the Christian confidence that things are arranged as they are in nature in order that character may thrive here. Not all the Lippmanns of the world can prevent people from being tremendously concerned with the purpose of the organization of matter; not even if a dozen Canutes were to lend a hand!

The spiritual aspiration of our generation is for a God great enough to take in all the facts of life. And, task though it is, those of us who preach ought to have that God in our preaching, just as back there at Pentecost Peter read aright the spiritual aspiration of his generation, and linked his message to their longing for a messiah.

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[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

This leads to another observation, on which less will be said here, but which is equally vital. The spiritual aspiration of our generation is for a God good enough to take all the wrongs out of life. Wrongs, to be sure, are relative, and the attainments of higher planes of living make existing planes unendurable. Yet the phrase here employed at least is indicative of what the world now seeks with a longing so intense that none who knows the Spirit can doubt its origin. People wish to know beyond all doubt that God is out against the iniquities and injustices that dwarf personality, and that he possesses and proffers the power through which his children can make appreciable advances in the now so imperfectly understood art of living. It may be that all we can hope for "when hot for certainty" is "the dusty answer" one poet suggests; but if there is a joyous answer, as Christians have always maintained, then, by all means, preachers should see to it that people get it!

VII

The preaching of Peter at Pentecost gives us yet another clue. He made a Christian interpretation of new phenomena. We need to do that too. In our day, a deal is new. We have a new universe on our hands. We are living in a day in every day of which it is growing vaster. When we ask a man like Einstein why he should plague the race with his new theories, he tells us that without them the whole story could not be told. Scientific miracles stir those whom biblical miracles left unmoved. Every clearing scientists make indicates some undiscovered country, from whose bourne no traveler has returned, because none has got to it.

Every great problem we solve seems but to hide a greater. Will the old religion we love do the new universe? Can we make an interpretation that leaves us with a God who is proud to be known as Christ? The task puzzles many. Others have only sneers for it. They trace things to physical facts. They think that spiritual things can be intellectually or economically explained. But Christians must see the Spirit in it. It is theirs to point at the universe as they point out the God of love, and to say: " This is that."

Religion itself awaits reinterpretation. The psychology of religion is a new thing under the sun.

The grand old poet asked: " He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see? " But many a psychologist has arisen from his study of religion to assert that the hearing and seeing is not God's, but ours! Here at least is one fight confronting the faith. With a patois all their own, and with manifold statistics, the psychologists of religion invade life's inmost places, to pry loose the secrets there. When their work gets into full swing, will they bring in a bad report? Or will they demonstrate that human nature can actually be adjusted to its total environment in the way Jesus said it can?

The psychology of religion! At the mention of it, there are preachers whose minds go blank. They give it up! And there are those who attribute all of it to the devil. What strikes fear to the hearts of some, and elicits hate from others, to the pentecostal preachers is nothing short of the promise of power. They see in it another descent of " cloven tongues " and a new manifestation of " the wonderful works of God." They interpret it in terms of the Spirit. They feel sure that " this is that."

Then there is the new humanity that awaits interpreting. A quaint conglomeration, that! In many ways we appear to dehumanize life. Dr. Dewey has pungently pointed out how busy we are these days fooling ourselves about ourselves and our world. We deny the existence of hazards, we laud universal law, we prate about inevitable progress. We act as if riches could magically ward off risks. We surround ourselves with devices for hiding the disagreeable.

On the one hand, then, we have the spectacle of human beings living unhumanly. Even in our churches, where people might be expected to come to their best, luxury threatens to overcome sacrifice, convention withholds conviction, competition nullifies fellowship, and the spirit of controversy stifles the spirit of brotherhood. Add to these our economic conflicts in everyday life, our sex saturation, our racial antipathies, and you have a picture surely far from inspiring.

But to offset these disheartening appearances, there is a better side. The world was never quite so one, and probably never quite so at one, as it is today. Science has compelled all the nations to move on to one street. We may yet be separate, but we can never again be separated. Opinion " hath traveled without passport," and the lines of knowledge have gone out to all the earth.

What is the place and task of Christianity in regard to the new humanity? Can we supply the link by which the people shall all become " of one accord," even if, for the sake of it, it should turn out that we should have to have " all things in common"? When one asks preachers for an answer to these questions, some of them give up at once. They see questions, but no answer. Others deem the idea of brotherhood and fellowship an intoxicated one. But there are those to whom the voice of faith in the realm of God sounds like a "sound from heaven, as of a mighty rushing wind." They thank God for it, and call on all they meet to repent, to change their minds, and believe! "This is that," they say; "this is that."

But we have more to do than to make interpretations. We must make interpreters! Our preaching must convince folks of the sort of treatment they ought to accord the interpreters of the new. How considerate will they be of pentecostal Peters, and of scientific or political or economic ones? Certainly, the church has much to atone for on this score. What prophets it has stoned; what injury it has worked the interpreters! When the man with seeing eyes came, saying, "This is that," the church all too frequently answered, "That's that!" and made an end of him.

We might, to much profit, cite instances, and cite them often. "That's that," said the ecclesiastical authorities, when Galileo's eyes had "dreamed, dark, on a sky too beautiful for tears." Somebody who had written in Joshua had been fond of an old book of poems, edited by a man named Jashar, and had quoted some lines from it: "Stand still, O Sun, upon Gideon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until all the people had avenged themselves." Now here came a man who said the sun could not stand still. So the Pope and the cardinals forced him to come from Florence to Rome, and to get down on his knees, and say: "I, Galileo, being in my seventieth year, and being a prisoner and on my knees and before your eminences, having before my eyes the holy gospel which I touch, abjure, curse, and detest the error and the heresy of the movement of the earth."

"That's that," said Christian people, when Darwin suggested evolution. The world so old as all that, when they had the word of a bishop for it that the world had been created, on the morning of the fourth of October, four thousand and four B.C.? Away with the blasphemer! A young teacher at Rugby took his father a Christmas gift of Darwin's "Origin of Species" the year it came out. The old man was deeply stirred. "I cannot conceive," he said, "how a book can be written on the subject. We know all there is to be known about it. God created plants and animals out of the ground." "That's that," said he. "That's that," said they!

"That's that," said clergymen, when Pasteur announced his discoveries. They gave Bible for it: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Should antitoxins be allowed to interfere with the Lord's designs? It is easy to see that Pasteur ought to have had better sense than to blame germs for deaths for which credit should go to the Lord. "That's that," said the church, and put him out. With samples like these in mind, had our preaching not better take into account more considerateness toward interpreters?

VIII

To perpetuate Pentecost we need to strike the positive note. When those folks asked Peter what they had better do, Peter had an answer ready. He had some concrete suggestions to make. So must it be with us. We do not need to use Peter's words. But we do need to use his frankness. They were to repent and be baptized; they were to adjust their way of living to Jesus and identify themselves with his cause. And many did.

For the sort of preaching that is to beget the pentecostal, nothing is more needed just now than this ancient challenge to the instantly heroic. Most of us are so afraid to make fools of ourselves. We have fewer compunctions about making fools of others. To call Peter's crowd "drunk" is easy, and to say that its members are out of their heads requires small stamina; but to join Peter's crowd — there's the rub! Nothing helps great interpreters more than great sympathizers. If you cannot solve vast problems, at least cheer on those who try! That made Pentecost a success. That would make Christianity one too!

So many are still averse to taking sides. They are enthusiasts for the middle of the road. A lot of leaden conduct is cloaked with the golden mean. We are all for tolerance, that pleasant word that serves us in so many unpleasant situations. If with tolerance we mean conciliation, there is no fault to be found. But as to all other tolerance, thrice shame upon it! There would still be slavery, had not someone become intolerant; children would still be stooping in the mines and crawling in the fields, " weeping in the playtime of the others," had not someone become utterly intolerant and greatly excited; we would still have autocrats to lord it over us had not someone become intolerant enough to assert that " God is tired of kings."

We are indulgent and patient with what is and impatient and unbelieving with what ought to be. We are geniuses at compromise, but not so good at adjustments. The crying need just now is for groups that dare to be " fools for Christ's sake"; fools of the Pentecost brand:

"Wisdom 'tis and courtesy
Crazed for Jesus Christ to be."

Adjustment of our lives to the Spirit of Christ and identification with his cause must be concretely stated, so that folks do not go into the church with their eyes only half open. They need to be told from the start that the vision of God is not some bit of personal enjoyment of a mild spiritual sedative, but that, as Bishop McConnell has enumerated it, the vision must put us steadily on the lookout for "better health, more wealth, sounder knowledge, larger freedom, closer fellowship."[4]

There are preachers who are so saddened by the disparity between the Spirit of Jesus and the hidebound condition of most of the people of the church, that they shrug their shoulders in despair and leave the ministry. Most preachers who do persist in their task go about a good part of the time with a heartache because of the careless and callous hearing given messages begotten in prayer and reared in thoughtfulness. All the more reason, therefore, that preachers should be heartened by fellowship. Unfortunately, most of us are in no position to be very concrete. So much as yet is unchristian with us. The conceit of our academic attainments, the flaunting of our degrees, the competition with our salaries, the class distinction of the "prominent pulpiteers," and the envy of those in inconspicuous places toward those who get preferment — what an unholy catalogue all these bespeak! We must look to our own house first, until our house is filled with the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit sits upon each one of us.

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[4] Francis J. McConnell, *Human Needs and World Christianity* (The Friendship Press).

CHAPTER VIII

PENTECOST AND WORLD EVANGELISM

I

THAT Pentecost resulted in the Fellowship, and the Fellowship in turn resulted in the Church, is clear enough. Other results of Pentecost, however, cannot be placed in precise order. But their connection with Pentecost is undeniable.

Pentecost gave the world an international Christianity. Whether or not " at the Tower of Babel God confused men's speech," certain it is that " at Pentecost he unified their speech." The Christ who came into the world at Bethlehem went into the world at Pentecost.

Evangelism was bone of the bone of Pentecost. People who came together to that sight were openly and instantly called upon to repent, to decide for the Christian life, and to be baptized. Those who live in the Spirit are bound to wish others so to live. Pentecost produced indomitable evangelists, as we have seen, and Peter was chief of them that first day. One speech from him, and men began to feel in urgent need of God: " Men and brethren, what shall we do?" What would most of us not give if only once we could make a speech like that!

But though Peter's speech led to a revival, it was far from revivalistic. There was none of the cruder calls to steer clear of hell, least of all was there trace of the demand that men embrace the old time religion, which was good enough for their fathers, and by that token ought to do for all of them. Nor was there in it the assurance of emotional ecstasy, or of a second blessing that would give one a privileged place in the tiny coterie of the selectmen of God. Pentecost, as a matter of meticulous fact, had not an iota of pentecostalism, which always has been, and is to this day, an outlandish parody on the strains heard of the Spirit these many years ago.

So far from urging them to embrace the old time religion, Peter was calling the people to something distinctly new in religion. Probably he himself scarcely recognized how very new it all was. But he knew enough for a good start! His idea of salvation consisted in men's realization of the vitality and validity of the Spirit of Jesus everywhere and all the time. The arguments he advanced may not all hold water for us, and a few of them certainly would make little or no appeal to us in our day. But his central emphasis that the life of Jesus was in the mind of God for human furtherance was the one to which we all adhere, if so be we know at all what his Spirit means for life. It was this that gripped his hearers, and has gripped and will grip all who yield themselves to the pursuits of the Christian, now and forevermore.

II

But this is only to say that his evangelism was missionary to the core. In his explanation of the phenomena he utilized and adapted the prophecy: " I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh "; and if, in so doing, he spoke better than he knew, he seems to have known enough to keep right on in that strain: " The promise is unto you, and to your children " " as well as those far away." Peter began to echo the " great commission " attributed to the Master — and debated so frequently of late — urging the disciples to go into all the world and disciple the nations. If Jesus never uttered that commission, we are sure his Spirit did! But if he did say it — and I for one believe he did — then those disciples never quite caught his meaning until they were given the Spirit.

Dr. Klausner has said that the Jews can never give Jesus the place Christians do. This, for two reasons: first, his conception of the love of God, through which his enthusiasm for forgiveness threatens the imperatives of righteousness; second, he is entirely too much of an internationalist. Let the first of these charges go. As for the second, that distinguished Jewish scholar put his finger right on the spot, except that unfortunately he does not see the spot in our light. Let us hope that most modern Jews disagree with Dr. Klausner. Christ's internationalism! We glory in that! And our glorying is directly traceable to Pentecost. The gift of the Holy Spirit changed patriotism for those men — and changed it for the better.

Not even the so-called "Judaizing" party which, before a great while, began to make itself felt in Jerusalem, and which had such relentless impatience with Paul, lacked the missionary spirit. It opposed Paul's teachings, not his aim. Everybody who had the Spirit felt it ought to be communicated to all.

Just about all Acts does, aside from stating what the Spirit meant to the disciples in victories and vicissitudes, is to tell the story of those who go here, there, everywhere, always with the gospel. It was foremost in the purpose of Luke to report the missionary activities of the early Christians. He takes pains to show that the movements of men who are moved by the Spirit are missionary, first, last and all the time! Since they had been told that they would be "witnesses" "unto the uttermost parts of the earth," it was only logical that they should get so that they " walked in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost " — which comfort consisted, in large part, in the happy evidence that " they were multiplied." For that was what they were after. Luke saw Paul Spirit-led to the Gentiles; separated, at the Spirit's suggestion " for the work whereupon I have called " him.

To him, and to the other Christians of his day, it brought the greatest of joy to observe " what signs and wonders God . . . wrought among the Gentiles by them." If there is any one point made above all others in the Book of Acts it is that the Holy Spirit was the Initiator and Inspirer of missionary work. Having the Holy Spirit, they had the urgent desire to eliminate the unholy and to introduce the holy everywhere.

That was the outcome of Pentecost. The Spirit drove them out of the place it had filled to redeem the world. The local evangelism of Peter became the world evangelism of Paul. Not that this transition was reasoned out. Far from it! Grace was so abounding that race did not count! Out they went, with their good news, to Jew and to Samaritan, with a nonchalance that would have shocked them out of countenance prior to the incoming of the Spirit. Philip, on the border line, with his worshipful Ethiopian; Peter, over the line, in his courageous conference with Cornelius; Paul, so far over the line that divisions were clean forgotten, with his multiform dealings with the Gentiles; all of them moved to interracial and international concepts by the Spirit which was given them. If, as time wore on, Jewish Christianity receded and Hellenistic Christianity came to the fore, it was because the Greeks naturally found it easier to adjust themselves to internationalism.

III

Jews did not find it easy to regard " Gentiles " equal to themselves. It went contrary to tradition and training. Race faith and race pride were strong in them. And yet, to those who had the Spirit there was no going beyond spiritual evidence: " And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit. . . . Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? "

From the first, the power of adaptation had characterized Pentecost. See now how it worked out! Here were people in whom nationalism was justifiable, if ever it was! Notwithstanding this, they were able to readjust their attitude toward those who shared the Fellowship of the Spirit. Nor do we have just a single illustration of this fact. The record is eloquent. Peter had gone to Joppa, as indicated before. He had gone there to preach to the Jews. There, in a " dream," he was invited to eat unclean beasts. Naturally, he stood aghast at the offer. But the lesson was learned. What brought him around to the Christian view of the Gentile was a visit to a Roman officer who, having had a " vision " of his need of Peter, had sent for him. When the two of them stood face to face, drawn together by the same spiritual aspirations, it did not take whole-souled Peter long to rise to the occasion. Gone was his exclusiveness; then and there the bars for him broke down, and a great soul began to appreciate internationalism.

But when the folks at Jerusalem heard of it, and learned that he had not only visited, but eaten in the home of the " uncircumcised," they were scandalized. Who would have thought that of Peter? Yet when Peter replied: " Forasmuch as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I, that I could withstand God? " they could not but agree that he had done right. Men who had the Spirit belonged together, regardless of standing or race.

It was not a long step from this to a thoroughgoing internationalism, obscure as that for long remained to all but the much maligned mystics. The New Testament furnishes faint, but suggestive glimpses of the difficulties of race adjustment among the early Christians. But it also provides proofs of the splendors of it. Not many years pass, before the Gentile, through Paul, goes to the aid of the mother church. Nor was it only material things with which he repaid love. The contribution of mind and personality was best of all; through these the " home church " had its own life enriched:

" For not to any race, or any clime,
Is the completed sphere of life revealed;
He who would make his own that round sublime,
Must pitch his tent on many a distant field."

So this is what it came to: If the Spirit was concerned with all, and people of all races could be in the Spirit, then it stood to reason that the Spirit made all the world one:

" God's sons are they on that far coast,
And nurslings of the Holy Ghost."

What mischievous obscurantists the literalists of the centuries have been, that to so pregnant a New Testament truth their eyes should have been holden, and that this revolutionary revelation should, in consequence, have been for so long with-held from the masses of men in the church and out of it!

IV

It may not be amiss to stress the point that Christianity is inherently international. It was international before Pentecost, inasmuch as it was international in a Christ who, miraculously enough, "came not but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel," and whose entire ministry was contained within puny geographical boundaries. Christianity was life-wide; how then could it be other than world-wide? Its whole approach was that. It took in all of life and therefore took all of life in.

Missionary work and its resultant internationalism revealed the character of the Spirit. If it made men universal, it *was* universal. Obviously, this is a bit of backward reasoning; but it has point to it, none the less. Not that the process was perfected in a day. But internationalism found a habitation, not local, and a name at Pentecost.

Pentecostal persons always pushed back horizons. They gave Christianity a swing in the direction of the ends of the earth. From the start, despite inevitable, but, as they seem to us now, unfortunate contacts with pagan cults and mystery religions, and despite the heavy handicap of a widespread belief in the immediate physical return of our Lord, which so soon took hold upon them, the church retained a humanity-wide trend. Of course, there were lapses; the saddest of them all taking in the major portion of the career of Protestantism. But even there it could not last long, so long as the gospels were being read. The genius of Christianity began to seep out and in, and the missionary-minded steered the church back on its course.

To this day, in this corner or that, you may espy some " simple Simon " who has not yet heard the news and is insulated against internationalism, but this type will not long survive. Yet the evidence of active participation in Christian internationalism has not come as fast as one might wish. With a rough average of one out of every three church members in American Protestantism contributing regularly to the missionary and benevolent enterprises of Christianity, one can see that the need for a pentecostal enthusiasm about it is by no means past.

V

Carlyle once said that " the inward life of mankind is the same in no two ages." If he meant to say that humanity will always have variety, or will always register changes, he spoke truly. Yet certain phases persist through the centuries. Their forms may change, but they themselves abide. Hence, while it is true that the inward life of Christianity is the same in no two ages, some of its aspects are permanent. The fruits of the Spirit will always be the same. And internationalism will always result from the pentecostal. Christianity, when true to its Spirit, is bound to proclaim and further world evangelism.

Internationalism is never safe until evangelism is the heart of it. That, I think, is what we are apt to overlook in our thought of missions. We leave the main track of Christian concepts, and begin to travel down the sidings of self-determination, indigenous control, and items of that sort. But though these matters need intense consideration at the hands of ecclesiastical statesmen, of whom, by this time, there are some remarkable ones, we do best to keep foremost in our consciousness the fact that evangelism, which is, or ought to be, the passion for fellowship through God in Christ with man, is still the high need of the hour.

Many forces exist to nullify this passion, or, at least, to prevent its whole-souled expression. Imperialism, unchristian patriotism, pagan philosophies for social orders, and scores of other enemies of the faith in fellowship go hand in hand to make the Christianization of humanity impossible. No person in his right mind can fail to see that the deepest tragedy in all this is that many of those who prevent evangelism from achieving the Realm of God among men, are themselves earnestly desirous of being Christian, and are allied with the Christian church, and, like as not, contribute toward missions!

It has been observed that those people who were " pricked in their hearts " had been in church a good deal just before that, and it had made little difference in them. But when the day of Pentecost was come, they heard, not in the time-honored ritualistic language but in their own tongue. Then they took notice; were " pricked in their hearts."

One wonders if that is not our trouble right now. One Christian statesman has rightly pointed out the danger of the sentiment of pity in our missionary appeals. And paternalism has also figured considerably in time-honored missionary concepts. We need to get under conviction of sin in a sense little thought of heretofore — the sin of the failure to fellowship. Our missionary presentations must come to be pre-eminently pentecostal. We shall have to preach a race-reach to people, so that the day will speedily come when no person on earth can be " converted " in any evangelistic campaign or movement without immediately being given to understand the far-flung implications of changing over from self to Christ.

The biggest hindrance to the fellowship of faith in the Spirit of Jesus is that so-called Christian lands show so little of it at home and abroad. We must practise world evangelism spontaneously; missions must be changed from a-kind-sentiment-to-get-enthusiastic-about to an inherent attitude calling for the enlistment of all of our religious devotion, and for the adjustment of our economic practices. To pray audibly for the coming of the Kingdom, but to stand actually in fear of fellowship, is an anomaly the church cannot long endure, if it cares to have Christendom become Christian.

CHAPTER IX

PENTECOST AND PROPERTY

I

THROUGH Pentecost, the Spirit affected property. Less attention is given this product of Pentecost than most others. When it is mentioned, it is often with a view to ruling it out of court. Your true conservative says that their "communism" failed. Your liberal checks it up to a mistake, and says that since they felt the end of the age to be at hand, their regard for property forthwith departed.

What ought to impress us about their experiment is not their "failure," but their valor. The cold fact that one nowhere finds the hope of the return of the Lord so much as suggested in connection with their conduct toward property, and the evident fact that they actually gave themselves a great deal of concern about property matters, runs counter to this simple way of disposing of the question. We cannot get it off our hands in any such way as this! Everyone knows of the long line of property-surrenders that have occurred through the centuries in anticipation of our Lord's earthly return.

This fact ought to dissuade the faint from supposing that Mammon holds the one outpost religion never can hope to conquer! With the pentecostal people, there was not property divestment for the sake of being "caught up in the clouds," but property-investment for the sake of the Fellowship. This was, furthermore, done voluntarily; not everyone gave up his property, nor was he expected to. Probably no one gave all he had.

II

All too little do we meditate upon the fact that every man who has ever been greatly moved of the Spirit has begun to put a religious interpretation upon his wealth, and has taken something of a spiritual attitude toward property. Even Luther, who has none too healthy a reputation at this point, had a conscience that kept talking loudly to him of the matter. From Clement and Chrysostom to Wesley and Booth, the testimony is the same. Their attitude comes like a chorus, ascribing praise to God in property! In every age a new group of social saints, in whose lives the Spirit carries on high transactions, catch the falling torch from the hands of slain Franciscans and hunted

Waldenses, who insisted that Christ should be glorified in the things which men possess. The concurrent testimony of the centuries backs up the account in Acts.

Of course, modern Christians go much further than the disciples. The latter did not set out deliberately to transform existing and accepted institutions into Christlikeness, as we do now. The Spirit did not lead them into all the truth at once. Neither did their institutions, with the possible exception of the Temple, have the economic status of ours. But it led them in the right direction. Those whose lives the Spirit touches become ethically energetic; and Christian groups, from the start, began to see material possessions in a religious light. They felt that property ought to be placed at the disposal of Christ's cause.

III

The early experiments were not nicely shaded differentiations in conduct for those who chanced to be of genteel constitution. They were hardy; they went deep! To this day, when Pentecost is linked with property, it sets folks agog! " And all that believed were together, and had all things common, And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. . . . Neither was there among them any that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands and houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made to every man according as he had need."

Disturbing reading, that! For it means that the Spirit in the Fellowship put soul into property, and attempted to have it administered equitably for all. I can still hear one dear old preacher gleefully demonstrating that their experiment failed, and failed so badly that Paul, out of the goodness of his heart, had to go around taking up collections for " the saints that be at Jerusalem." He actually enjoyed his explanation. And it must be confessed that the other and accurate explanation is less exhilarating, and far more humiliating, especially when it occurs to us how afraid of it we are.

Life in the Spirit moved that pentecostal group to broach the simple but important financial and economic problems of their group upon a spiritual basis. Property was made subservient to personality. Whether they did it to meet an emergency, or to inaugurate a policy, matters not at all. What does matter is that they felt intuitively that the property of the spiritual should express the Spirit, and should further the life of Christ among men. They began to practise stewardship.

Not one of them arose to assert that " tithing is God's plan for the world." Although tithing may further God's plan! But they all just naturally — or just spiritually — felt that the major purpose of money should be the advancement of character. It was to be expected, among them, that the expanding desire for Christ should get the better of the expansive desire for gain. To this day, the trouble is less that folks get wealth than that they require it. It is because we want so much that we are so little. They wanted little, and were much!

Furthering each other's good was naïvely bound up with sharing each other's goods. Nor was compromise tolerated. Luke tells of Barnabas who, " having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet." The Brotherhood of Barnabas has never assumed large proportions, but its achievements far outrun its numerical proportions. Acts puts Barnabas and Ananias in contrast. Ananias — inside the Fellowship, at that! — permitted " Satan " to fill his " heart to lie to the Holy Ghost " about the price he had received for his land. Caught in the act, the shock proved too much, and Ananias " gave up the ghost," and his wife came to similar grief.

Cardinal Manning once said that " all social problems are fundamentally theological." They are also fundamentally religious. Harry F. Ward describes how inevitable this is: " When modern

Protestantism accepted the natural law of rationalizing philosophers and economists and tried to leave economic affairs outside the house of God, it was attempting the impossible; they could not stay there. The effort of both Capitalism and Communism to dispense with religion, no matter how much agreed to by ecclesiasts, is a feint. Both turn round and use it for their own ends, both call into play in their own activities its qualities of faith and hope."[1]

One who lives in the Spirit gets social convictions, and dares to experiment with them. The pentecostal people put their property at the service of the Kingdom. That is as plain as any narrative can make it. In the early ministrations, the "seven" sought to be methodical, but took care not to be mechanical. They judged each case on its merits: "As every man had need." A haunting phrase, that; and a challenging one! The pentecostal persuasion that property must contribute to the success of Christianity, and must be expressive of it, has seldom even been noted in the creeds of Christendom.

However, there is now "the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees." Future generations, while doubtless succeeding in securing improved results from better experiments, will yet rise up to call those early experimenters blessed for the example that tenaciously will not let us go, so long as Acts stays in our Bibles.

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[1] Harry F. Ward, *Our Economic Morality* (The Macmillan Company).

IV

Nor was this the only experiment those early disciples carried on. Impelled by their life in the Spirit, they also undertook to minister to men's bodies in Christ's way, and in his name. Prior to Pentecost, their failure at this point had been conspicuous. " Why could not we? " they had asked. But now, when they had a chance to heal, they took care to remember that they were acting in the name of Jesus; and when they got into difficulty, they had the conviction that the Lord, by stretching forth his hand to heal, would enable them to make their witness to his Spirit the more effectively.

The church has always retained a measure of this particular form of ministry. I think it can be historically substantiated that the effectiveness and even the existence of hospitals, as of orphanages and homes, date back in a straight line to Jesus. Oddly enough, the church throughout its history has been more interested in getting folks cured than in seeing them fed!

But the total daring plan of ministering intimately and personally to the daily necessities and to the bodily welfare of people, did not long survive those early days. Writings subsequent to the Pauline mark a swift decline on this score. Ere long the attempt to make the daily round contribute, so far as possible, to the Christian life, was lost sight of.

V

For a decade or two now, stewardship has been proclaimed and taught. Not that it was ever totally unheard of. There have always been stewards; not a few of them outside the church. But some years ago certain prophets arose to reinterpret for us Christ's attitude toward property. We can never thank them enough for the service they rendered. Had the movement remained true to these major messengers, we should now have a greatly enriched church — spiritually rather than financially. But it soon fell from grace.

Managers got the better of the messengers. Their motives were good, but they got a wrong start. They manipulated the movement in the interest of ecclesiastical boards. Elsewhere, I have made allowance for the things they did.[2] But no amount of extenuation can undo the damage. We shall suffer from it for some time to come! They made an end a means! They began to talk stewardship with a vengeance. They converted a character compass into a campaign slogan. The application of the word stewardship to every phase of activity in the church served to empty it of the meaning it first conveyed. Stewardship took a spiritual nose-dive and, so far, has not gotten over it.

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[2] John M. Versteeg, *The Deeper Meaning of Stewardship* (Abingdon Press).

Those managers were at once industrious and ingenious. They began to call for the stewardship of prayer. Pamphlets by the bushel were turned out to honor the theme. Few took the pains to protest that prayer does not essentially stand for something we have in trust, but that it stands essentially for Someone we have trust in. And the few who did were not listened to! Men naïvely surrendered the venerable vocabulary that sang of the power of prayer, with never the shadow of a question whether the new phrase had better sense and more truth. Stewardship! *There* was the word to conjure with! Nor was stewardship of prayer the only form for which the managers set up a shout in the camp. They also made much ado about the stewardship of talent, time, life-service. But, of course, it took the stewardship of treasure to produce the major results! Hence all other forms were intended to bring " up " the contributions. And it did look at first as if they would.

Little did the managers perceive at what expense this expanse of stewardship was purchased. There is that in stewardship which inexorably demands that it shall go deep before it can hope to go far. To this fact managerial eyes were uniformly shut. They let stewardship cover so much that it covered nothing enough. Hence the idea rather than the ideal of stewardship found advocacy. Here and there some voice was lifted to recall the prophetic note. Could it only have been heard! But scarcely a murmur got past, what with the din of departments and the clamor of campaigns.

To this day, you hear talk of the Gospel of One-Tenth, or of the Gospel of the Nine-Tenths. What we need is a Gospel of Everything — everybody's ten-tenths and all possessions. To this day we hear the boast that the tithers are the ones who are catching the secret of New Testament stewardship. Would that they were! If they have caught the secret, they are certainly keeping it secret. How many of them are bringing forth fruits worthy of stewardship? Not a word is here said against tithing. We would gladly say many words for it; and have! But the opportunity of the tithe should not blind us to the tragedy of the tithe.

A step in the right direction may easily be the wrong kind of a step. One does not necessarily climb when one steps; some only step in a circle; others, for all their stepping, merely step backwards and down! And any stewardship that deals only or chiefly with property-possessions rather than with property-purposes comes short of the mark. Which is to say, that you cannot cram stewardship into tithing; but stewardship without tithing is badly cramped!

VI

The simple fact is that we shall have to spiritualize our economics if we wish to Christianize the race. It was in the direction of this naïve but far-reaching truth that the Spirit set the pentecostal Fellowship. Perhaps the church in the United States is after all not the church through which Christ can come into his own. Perhaps we are too much joined to our idols. Perhaps! Whether it came in a day, a period, or a century, a Pentecost of first proportions would be upon us if property ever got out from under pagan auspices! For when we miss the social meaning of salvation, we may still talk of the plan of salvation, but the emphasis will be on the plan and not on the salvation. So long as property is interpreted in terms of rights, rewards and privileges rather than in terms of functions, obligations and service, we are alien to the Spirit of Christ. The Bible frequently warns us that material things often bar and destroy spiritual things. But the statements of Jesus, and the story of Pentecost, exhort us to let the material *aid* the spiritual. Shall we ever give ear?

Dewey tells us that if we wish to get sentimental, all we need to do is to discuss ends without regard to means. This is why we need to listen to such searching suggestions as those made by Harry Ward. For " the more the capacity to produce is multiplied by technical processes, the more necessary it is that the consideration of need should take precedence over that of effort in the distribution of ownership and income. Otherwise inequality will multiply. To give need priority means a scientific approach to the problem of property, adjustment to observable and predictable situations, whereas to keep effort in first place is to develop an authoritarian treatment — to enthrone the past and to keep the grip of the dead hand on the world of tomorrow." [3]

If we are not willing to alter our property procedure as well as our philosophy of property, we will certainly have no kinship with Pentecost, for there, so far from disparaging the use of things, they disciplined the use of things. What stands in the way of the universal adoption of Christianity is not our science, but our inhumanity. It is still the order of the day among us to qualify the spiritual by the economic, and we must come to qualify the economic by the spiritual.

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[3] Harry F. Ward, *Our Economic Morality* (The Macmillan Company).

This machine age must have a humane technique, in which the lust to possess will give way to the desire to create, in which ownership will no longer mean lordship, and in which even the amusement world must come to cater to character. The temptation with us will always be to put this down as a beautiful ideal, and to put it off as an accomplishment of which the future must take care. But there is an urgency about all this, as the world stands today, that will not brook long delay.

Pentecosts do not go off by the alarm clock. But the wide awake can certainly read the alarm clock of the present world situation sufficiently to know that if a Pentecost depaganizing property does not occur soon, humanity's best chance will be gone! Now is the time for us to rethink and reform our economic morality. Now is the time for us to ask and answer the question: *What price money?* Now is the time to bring the endeavors of that pentecostal group, whose life was communal rather than communistic, up to date, and up to Christ!

" In parliamentary law," says Halford Luccock, " there is a great difference between an amendment and a substitute. The unreality of preaching is frequently due to the fact that the

Christian gospel is preached as an amendment to life rather than a substitute of new motives and new methods for old ones. Christianity is not an amendment to a pagan way of life; it is a substitute for all that is before us."[4] Only if we preach the gospel with our property and let our wealth witness to our spirit of love can we insure the power by which Christian history once again will effectively be made.

[4] Halford E. Luccock, "Reality In Preaching," *Effective Preaching* (The Abingdon Press). Reprinted by permission.

CHAPTER X

PENTECOST AND ETHICS

I

IN Christianity, ethics grow from religion as fruit does from a tree. Pentecost would have been other than Christian had no difference been noticeable in the conduct of that early group. We have already seen that it made them evangelistic with a total concern for personality; that it launched them on a program of service to other peoples; that it transformed the uses to which they put their property. They did not meet every issue; but they met enough of them to show the set Pentecost gives the conduct of Christians.

There were some issues at which they were slow to arrive. So far as the New Testament indicates, it was not until well on in the career of Paul that sex came within the purview of the Christian conscience. And there were some issues they never touched which we, in this day, dare not exclude from consideration. In a general way, however, it is still true that personality, patriotism, property and procreation are the major fields clamoring for ethical reconstruction. These must somehow be aligned with the Spirit revealed in Jesus when Pentecost took place. Who is sufficient unto these things?

It is the bane of ethics that it requires so much effort to effect them. That was not the case at Pentecost. Once they had the Spirit, " the new morality " just came! There was no strained hesitancy to see whether these new procedures would fit into human life. There was none of that tremulous doubt upon which present day treatises on morality and ethics ring the changes all the while. And why? Because, as Durant Drake confesses: " It is religion more than anything else that makes men *care* for moral ideals, nerves them to effort and sacrifice. . . . It is when a man does care for ideals, when he espouses them gladly, dedicates himself to them, makes them his own deepest desire,"[1] that we get somewhere. Well, if religion did nothing else, that would be immense gain.

At Pentecost, the ethical results of the spiritual insight were virtually immediate. Since then, the spiritual insights have frequently been non-ethical. Negative attitudes have been assumed; celibacy has been exalted above sex, " poverty " has been preferred to property; seclusion from the world to fellowship; escape into a make-believe world to the venture of love for humanity. A positive and immediate response to the Spirit has seldom been forthcoming in our groups.

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[1] Durant Drake, *The New Morality* (The Macmillan Company).

But there has now arisen a situation in the world that makes slow or negative responses to ethical challenges impossible. The newer ethics are coming! The advance guard is on the way! The next generation will have them on hand, and will have to deal with them. Indeed, the next decade may cast the die. Now to sit inert, or to repeat pious platitudes, is to play traitor to the Spirit and to the future. We can *now* put something of Pentecost into ethics, or henceforth deny Christ access to them.

II

It scarcely seems credible now that folks were ever afraid of Jesus. But they were. They rated him an outlaw. They feared him as a plague. They felt he corrupted morals. Religion was not safe with him. He was a major problem for the authorities. So they took him to a tree, and made an end of him. How were they to know that he would make a crown out of that cross?

And it comes with a shock to us when we hear, for the first time, that even today people fear him. It is to be expected that he should be feared by those who hate his way of life. What is surprising is that he is feared by many who reverently name his name. They find themselves embarrassed by Jesus. If only he could be satisfied with compliments! If only hymns and church services met his demands. But they do not. He is persistent about certain ideals, and swerves from them by never so much as a jot or a tittle. If he would only let up just a little! If only he would adjust himself to our institutions and customs! But he is out to change our customs, and to make over our institutions in his own image, after his likeness. Not all our music or poetry can still that voice of his. It has struck the same note for nineteen centuries, and despite our machinations, it has never once been off key.

On every hand now we are told just to let science tell us how to behave. The last few years have witnessed an avalanche of books, designed to show us exactly how to go about all this. Once someone hit on the idea — probably in some ancient book — that science is now in a position to give a safe conduct through life, almost every professor of ethics arose to the fray. It would be foolish to imagine that no good will come out of this. For the Spirit of Christ is always the spirit of truth, and truth has a way of surviving our sciences and philosophies, circumvent it as we may try. But the interesting thing to note is that many of these discussions push Jesus to one side. They slur the church, and decry it with relish; and as for the idea that Jesus henceforth is to have any say in the affairs of men, that, to them, is laughable! The leadership of religion in man's ethical pilgrimage is now being denied.

We should be of all men most miserable were we to retaliate by refusing to heed science at all. That is the way some folks do; but it is not the right way. We had best accept gratefully the suggestions science can make. Yet with all this said, we must remember that while science can indicate procedures, it cannot furnish power. And power is primary! Science, furthermore, will but provide us with the ethics of accommodation; and what we stand in need of most is the ethics of aspiration. We must not only know how to live together; we must know how to live ahead!

III

Humanists to the contrary notwithstanding, ethics root in religion. "The very impulse," said Middleton Murray, according to the *British Weekly,* "which drives . . . men to that utter honesty in their work, is mysterious. Why is it that they *cannot* tell lies? Why is it that they *must* be loyal to their experience, and therefore to humanity? The only answer I can give that satisfies me is that they acknowledge, somehow, an allegiance to a hidden universe."

When anyone therefore proceeds to deny the leadership of religion in the ethical life of man, he had best not speak too hurriedly. One cannot speak of morality without at least implying a conviction about the constitution of reality. If our moral values do not reach down to the bedrock of the nature and purpose of reality, then they are simply subjective and therefore void of meaning. What good are they then? The man who says, "I ought to do this," talks not simply of himself and of what he ought to do, nor even of public opinion about himself and his deed; he talks about "the opinion of the universe."

Hence Soloyof says: "The necessary presumptions of morality, namely, the existence of God and of an immortal soul, is not a demand for something extraneous to morality and additional to it, but is its own inner base. God and the soul are not the postulates of the moral law, but the direct creative forces of the moral reality." "I can do good, consciously and rationally," says Professor John Baillie, "only if I believe in the good and in its objective independent significance in the world, in other words, if I believe in the moral order, in God."[2]

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[2] John Baillie, *Roots of Religion in the Human Soul* (Richard R. Smith, Inc.)

Ethics can no more dispense with religion than religion can with science! The temptation of the orthodox is to give ethics *no* place in religion; the temptation of the liberal is to give ethics *the* place of religion! For we are not going to be ethical — even in the strictly scientific sense — unless we are going to be psychological. There is danger that the ethics of accommodation — the morality that provides us with procedures that are based upon scientific observation and experimentation — shall not go far enough; or that they shall keep us going like a squirrel in a cage, moving round and round, but never on.

For, unless we have the Christian conviction about personality, science, in any off moment, may enthrone the impersonal above the personal. If it should be asserted that science is not going to have any such off moment, it should be remembered that it has done just this. Religionists have but little to be proud of in the fact that many of their people get rid of a few of their meannesses, only then to become so self-satisfied that they are all the more callous to the appalling social sins. But neither can science, upon its ethical side, take much pride in its accomplishments. Certainly, the machine age, and the machine attitude fostered by the machine technique, do not furnish sterling proofs of ethical superiority.

This may be a case of the pot calling the kettle black, but if so, it is at least fair to assert that the pastime is not one-sided! Strange as it may seem to the modern scientific moralist, ethics have always been more or less scientifically reshaped; what religion, and especially the Christian religion, insists upon, is that they shall be reshaped with a view to the Christian emphasis on the primacy of personality. The ethics of accommodation cannot go far enough; for they can only accommodate themselves to what is already here; and there is no living without ideals! Unless we can " stand the universe," no ethic can long stand.

This is but one way of saying that the ethics of accommodation tend to take the stretch out of men's souls! For the heyday of religion is the day in which people have " more faith in the power of God and the possibilities of man than they have intellectual warrant for doing." The creation of higher moral needs and the attainment of higher moral ends is not to be lightly brushed aside. The fact of fellowship, scientifically recognized as inevitable in a world situated as ours is now, is one thing; but the passion for fellowship, spiritually recognized as ideal in any world, is quite another. To have community approval for our conduct, is one thing; to have such spiritual joy that we dare to " go the way of dominion in pitiful, high-hearted fashion," as did the men and women who fought for religious freedom or against human slavery, and so capture outposts to which ethics are perforce compelled later to conform, is quite another!

Minimum ethics are desirable. Maximum ethics are imperative! And nothing is more deadening to ethical endeavor than the humanism that embraces the peculiar dualism which separates the question of the good of the universe from the question of the good of humanity, hence tying our hands against the attempt to fit ourselves into the scheme of things entire.

IV

While we are on this theme of the difference between the ethics that are scientifically useful and those that are spiritually powerful, we do well to stress the point that ethics cannot dispense with Jesus. There is, of course, no necessary conflict between the scientific and the spiritual. Ethics should be both. But there is a sense in which science is temporal, and religion is eternal. To lose the perspective here is to go blind. And Jesus keeps our eyes open!

It is a quaint world in which we find ourselves. Among the scientific moralists, the recommendations grade up something like this: That Jesus should be left entirely out of the reckoning; that Jesus may yet be utilized religiously, but not ethically; that Jesus should not have quite so much of a say in human affairs, but still, some; that Jesus is needed as much now as ever; that Jesus was never so much needed as now.

If one has no care for history, one can easily dismiss Jesus as one who was deified, for lack of some other person who was available. But one who is fair to the facts is bound to see that it is not the theology about Jesus, but the character of Jesus expressed in his conduct that has riveted the attention of the world upon him.

We cannot get away from the stark goodness of the Man! Nor can we get away from his moral power. Reread the account of "Gene" Debs' stay in prison: "He made even the jailers love him. For many prisoners he changed the whole course of life. When the Warden asked Sam Moore, an embittered Negro facing life imprisonment, for the secret of the change Debs had wrought in him, the Negro replied: 'He was the only Jesus Christ I ever knew.'" Wherever nobility, disinterestedness, considerateness, sacrifice find their expression in the actual conduct of folks, Jesus at once rushes to mind as the measure of morality, the criterion of conduct. So has he impressed the centuries!

Let me say it again: Jesus was characterized, not by ethical compliance, but by ethical energy. And until scientific morality — which is unscientific the moment it cuts itself off from religion — can produce a character whose conduct is as cosmically convincing as was that of Jesus, or more so, Jesus will stand out as the ethical expert — expert, not on precisely which ethics we should now have, but expert on how to get, and how to get *to,* the ethics which our unsettled world now needs to keep it from settling down in the wrong place!

Never was a more searching question put than this: "What good does it do a man to gain the whole world and yet part with his life?" Out of Christ's soul nothing could dislodge his faith in God and in man. So confident in the Spirit was he that he would not compromise. That is always our way out! We are good at evading crosses by yielding a bit here and there. But he was a mover of inconvenient principles; he had no thought of making adjustments agreeable all around. He hit evils head on, yet kept his head while doing it. He never let up on exploitation; he could not tolerate injustice; he was frank about, but master of, sex; he counted the whole cost of the good life, and paid it. He did not believe that self-preservation, the first law of nature, should be the first law of human nature. He believed that self-investment is the first law of grace.

It is an unfailing mark of fright when people fancy that vituperation, not vigilance, is the price of liberty. But our fear, though with less excuse for it, is nothing new. If anyone deems his fear as original as, let us say, he fancies it patriotic, let him leaf the New Testament over again.

For the people, and the leaders of the people, in Jesus' day, were as fearful for their patriotism as are the most frightened of us now. Their ideas were equally definite and decisive. They too knew the one and only legitimate brand. Like us, they bound their religion up with their patriotism. For them, in unique fashion — or is it so unique after all? — political passions had religious sanctions. It was as correct for them to pray: " Destroy our enemies. Build up the throne of David in our midst," as it is for a pastor, of a Sunday, to invoke the divine blessing on the land. Not only was a messiah to deliver them, but he was to do it in a prescribed way. They expected to see a change. One insisting that inner changes in attitude would better their chances for deliverance from oppression, and that, without such changes, they stood no chance at all, was palpably a pretender.

When it dawned on them that Christ's method was reliance upon love, rather than resistance by force or advantage by intrigue, they got ready at once to make trouble. A meeting of the council was called. Caiaphus and the chief priests readily reached the conclusion that they were dealing with a dangerous character. Some were for action at once: " If we let him go on, everybody will believe in him, and then the Romans will come and put an end to our holy place and our people." How like some of our present arguments that sounds!

But saner counsel prevailed. It would not do, for the moment, to make too much of a stir. The crowd was to be reckoned with. Just yet the multitudes thought well of this young Galilean. Best wait until they were in a different mood. And wait they did. Share the political fears of the people, and you are a patriot. Interfere with their fears, or question the procedures their fears prompt, and you are a traitor. It is safer to make obeisance to bogeys than to live by the gospel. Most of us know that, and govern ourselves accordingly. Jesus knew that, and spurned it!

This left the rulers but one choice. He had to be put to death. And soon their chance came. He could not possibly have chosen a procedure more advantageous to their designs that his disparity of " this age " alongside " the Kingdom of Heaven." That angered them! Any man who has dared to play the searchlights of some majestic ideal upon the defects of his day has been in for trouble. You are not going to be given many votes of thanks if you dissect the doings of the day in which you live. Stand up in any city or state and say so they hear you that conditions are contrary to Christian conceptions, and see what comes of it. The devotees of "the God of things as they are" will rush to the defense of their idol and cry out upon you in wrath.

If only Jesus would oblige by saying that his Kingdom was to supplant this age, or hint that his religion would replace their temple, they would have something tangible to work on. They could make capital out of that! And he said it! "Bolshevism!" they shouted; "this is bolshevism!" At least, we must read it that way, to get at their sentiment. They knew that would sink in. "This age" has never left much room for revolutionists; at least not above ground. Yet for all their scheming, the rulers were really panicky. Fear crucified Christ! And faith did! For had Jesus not had the faith he had, he would never have gone through with the cross.

One of the most remarkable statements in all the New Testament is that Jesus was "the first born among many brethren." What the writer who penned those words wanted to say was that Christ's behavior resulted in concurrent conduct on the part of those whom his Spirit influenced. His faith was theirs; his endurance was theirs; like Paul, they said: "My gospel" when they were speaking of his; they lived eternal lives; they paid the price, for they had seen the world through his eyes and felt for people with his heart, until even his cross was theirs. For them, "there was power in the blood"; there was the same strain in them! Ethics cannot dispense with his example or his power, and remain worthy of the name ethics.

V

And there is this to be said: Ethics cannot possibly dispense with Pentecost. If you were to summarize in one sentence what Pentecost resulted in, you would not be far out of the way if you said: "Through faith they wrought righteousness." They did not simply declare the good, they discovered it. So far, the social scientists are not doing much of this. And for a good reason. Too many of them are socially reactionary. "Conform," and not "transform," is their slogan. One rises from the reading of their books wondering not whether their ethics are going to be scientific, but whether they are going to be human!

Pentecost was such a thorough revelation of the Spirit of Jesus in the lives of the disciples that religious and economic matters were immediately adjusted to it. At Pentecost, men were united to God in an ethical fellowship that resulted in the sort of behavior we have learned to value in the historic Jesus. And it all came about without trials for heresy! Pentecost produced the most arresting evidence of the power of religion to alter and improve ethical attitudes that we have any record of!

But even this is not all. It cannot be recognized with enough clarity that while ethics are necessities they are also limitations. Within us, there is the exigent call to the " just beyond "; the urge to perfection not as yet attained. Religion can never rest content to do merely the bidding of science or to simply sustain the " mores " and conventions recognized by the civilization of the hour. For then it would only perpetuate today, and not usher in tomorrow! It is far less the business of religion to make ethics go than to help ethics grow! Stanley Jones believes in " evangelizing the inevitable." Christianity must always do that!

This was, and is, the product of the pentecostal. It is an old story now — that story of " new " stars that are really old. They may be quit of their mass, but their energy abides. Light has a way of going on. We think we see a star in the sky, and find, upon inquiry, that it is the light of some star whose bulk has long been gone. Its incandescence preserves its individuality, is well nigh indestructible and appears to be immortal. Pentecost is like that. Its " mass " has been gone for centuries. But its light goes on! You can trace its individuality; there is something distinctive about it. It cannot be destroyed. Time and events work it no harm. The light lasts. And the reason for this is that its power is eternal.

Only in the strength of the Spirit can ethics be " more abundant." Pentecost always produces practical mystics, who live in the Spirit, and hence are able to put a new power into life. Those produced in our day will be wise enough to adjust their morality scientifically to conditions, and good enough to link their ethics to the lifting love of the God who was the soul of Christ. They will realize that we are never safely dependent upon ethics until, by the supremacy of our spirits, we are inwardly independent of ethics. As Professor Rauschenbusch once put it, it is the glory of a Christian that he carries his policeman inside of him!

CHAPTER XI

PENTECOST AND PROTESTANTISM

I

WE are too close to our age to judge it properly. But when, on any question, there is practically unanimous accord, we do well to consider it. Foe and friend alike feel that the religious condition of Christendom is not what it ought to be. All agree that Christendom is not enjoying at present a robust spiritual health. Bertrand Russell, whose logic often proves too good to be true, has little use for religion. It is, he feels, "*no longer sufficiently vital* [italics mine] to take hold of anything new; it was formed long ago to suit certain ancient needs, and has subsisted by the force of tradition, but is no longer able to assimilate anything that cannot be viewed traditionally."

It is easy enough to argue that there is but little to this charge; but it is certainly suggestive that his attack should center on our lack of vitality. John Henry Jowett, as ardent a friend of Christianity as Russell is a foe, lamented " the absence of the abiding miracle of a God-filled and glorious church." What are the reasons for this spiritual poverty? Perhaps all of them cannot be catalogued. But a few have singular similarity to problems with which the Fellowship and the early church had to grapple.

Let us confine our comparisons to the situation as it obtains in Protestantism. This is not to say that Protestantism has a monoply on these. Far from it. But in these matters we do well to look to our own house first.

II

We of the church have made the good the enemy of the best. There is nothing novel about that. It is an ancient and persistent error, and always has the same blighting results. That, among other things, was what Stephen was driving at the day he faced the Council. He was up on the charge of having said that Jesus would destroy the Temple. They were all against him for that; none more so than the young zealot Saul. So they gave him the sort of hearing a mob gives one whom it means to lynch.

But Stephen was equal to the occasion. He was not cautiously complimentary to those to whom he spoke. Perhaps he was just a bit too caustic; "Stiffnecked, betrayers, murderers!" Not nice words, these! No wonder they gnashed their teeth. But Stephen was much of a realist. His spirit X-rayed them. He knew them for what they were. And he entertained no delusions as to what they meant to do with him. He went at them as one minded to tell all the grim truth in one breath, seeing that all that was left him.

For us, his quotations are not the punctuations they were to his hearers that day. This is why we have to look close to get at the gist of his remarks. This is what he said, in effect: "You think more of your temple than you do of God! You are running true to form. Your fathers had the habit of hating the prophets. You are at their pastime now. You are more concerned with the temple than ever you were with the prophets, or are with the Spirit of God." He told them in so many words that they had habitually been against the Spirit and for the Temple. That speech cost him his life. But he deemed it a good investment.

The point Stephen made still needs making. For some reason or other, it has not been taken to heart. "Jesus," said Loisy, "announced the Kingdom, and it is the church that has come." Back of the bitterness in that comment is a fact we do well to note. So long as God is God, and we are human, the church will exist. We have done about all the quibbling about the survival of the church that needs to be done. There will always be those who mistake the growing pains of the church for an incurable disease.

Why worry about these? Our task is not to preserve the church, but to quicken it. The question is not whether the church is going to live, but whether it is going to be alive; whether it is ever going to be " an habitation of God in the Spirit." And there is no gainsaying the fact that in " the body of Christ " there has been and is all too little of the Spirit of Christ — and that this has been our fault, not Christ's. Things are at a sorry pass when we are more concerned with the existence than with the energy of the church; when denominational reports inquire how many members we have gained, instead of asking: Are any fools for Christ's sake? Have any been martyrs? From the standards to which they adhere, it is still to be said of some churches that they have not received the Holy Spirit since they believed. Certainly some of them " have not so much as heard " of any but a theological one!

And if the organization rather than the organism has been stressed, creed has collided with character, Bibliolatry has stunted Scripture, and logic has slain love. A clear illustration of the latter is afforded by the fact that we Protestants still go along as if we expected to win over Catholicism by advancing the better argument, rather than by showing the holier spirit. Sometimes it seems that our hate speaks so loud men cannot even hear our logic! And what even if they did? Pugnacity is not in itself evidence of vitality. It may be the opposite. The bad fight of hate and the good fight of faith have nothing in common. They differ in weapons and warfare.

The breaches in Christendom just yet seem to be beyond repair. Given a century or two of the Spirit of Jesus, they may appear in an entirely different light. There may be times when the church has no other choice than to move like a mighty army. But that is never the best way for it to move. The church must move like a mighty lover. That will get it somewhere; nothing else will! Organization, documentation, polemics, all have their place; but none is enough. In these lurk the dangers of exclusiveness, casuistry, ill will.

To be more specific, we need groups of women and men so inspired by the Spirit of Jesus that they will definitely and deliberately experiment in letting the good minister to the best; who will utilize church, Bible, intellect, property, and what not, that Christlike conscientiousness, considerateness and consecration may become evident in their everyday life. It will probably take a Pentecost to rid us of our presuppositions, and to give us taste for tasks in which we can look for but little applause, and for plenty of opposition.

III

In Protestantism, we have allowed the secondary to get in the way of the primary. That is just what the pure-stock Jews did in the pentecostal period: " And certain men which came down from Judea taught the brethren (that is, the Hellenistic Jews) and said, Except ye be circumcised, after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved." They actually believed that failure to observe their rite made salvation impossible. This is why they were after Paul. He had the audacity to make little of it. That was the last straw for them!

We too let the extraneous interfere with the essential. Ceremonials are not so popular as once they were. But when it comes to technique, we are all eager to get in on it! Said one minister in whose church school directors of religious education had been at work: " We have been turning out the best informed young people when it comes to religious items; the only thing we have not done is to make Christians out of them! " This was said, not to deride technique, but to indicate how readily it gets the upper hand!

But the issue goes deeper than technique. For what was implicit rather than explicit in the plea of those Judean Jews is that conduct of a certain sort is basic to religion; and as we have observed in preceding chapters, there can be no doubt that conduct and religion must walk together and be agreed. That conduct of a certain sort is necessary to the Christian religion is implicit and explicit today among American Protestants. So far, so good; indeed, so splendid! Yet it is just at this vital point that our present danger lies.

The church has been and is athrill with the prophetic note. It is the business of the church to tell people, in the name of God, some of the things they ought to do. And yet this is a business all too readily overworked, as witness the past and present history of the Roman Catholic church. The danger in Protestantism now is that this procedure, at best, tends to reduce Christianity simply to spiritualized ethics.

Let it be repeated that it would be a wonderful thing if more of us could see at least this far. Anyone who has grasped the ethical significance of our faith has come a long way along. He is not far from the meaning of the Kingdom. But he has yet a step to go, and that step is the most vital of them all. Christianity is ethical spirituality rather than spiritualized ethics. Since humanism is likely to stay with us for a time, it may here be said that we charge it with the blunder of the Judean Jews, in giving the secondary the value of the primary. If humanism alone were guilty of this, no Christian would need to lose any sleep! But, alas, we ourselves are doing precisely the same thing, only in a different way.

Christianity is a religion before it is an ethic, but it could not be the religion it is were it not an ethic too. Both of these facts stand like mountain peaks in the pentecostal narratives. Christianity does not admit of the sharp contrast between subjective and objective views of God and life which many writers enjoy making. It does admit of an emphasis. It is the glory of Christianity that it is ethical and that its God is moral; but the emphasis must forever remain upon spirituality. Every Christian ought to stand guard here. Christianity must never abdicate as a religion.

We have so many drives; there is so much of reform, uplift, amelioration. God knows we need these too! Indeed, we need more. For all the dubious literature appearing in a day when so many writers would rather say something smart than something accurate, there is more biological, social, psychological, theological reconstruction needed than most of us, or possibly all of us, have begun to suspect. That is, if we really do wish the realm of God to come. Society must be godlike if people are to be godly, in the full sense of that word. Both must be "converted" and "entirely sanctified."

But even a new social order is but a means to an end. Securing better conditions for people is to be attempted in the hope that we may secure better character in people. We are after the soul — which, as one book puts it, is coming back — but personality is socially conditioned; nothing must stand in the way of the soul's life in God. The claim that work for God is the best way to God scarcely states all the facts. Is it not more correct to say that once one lives in God, one is bound to work with God? It stands to reason that we cannot hope to understand what God is until we share what God does. But neither can we understand what God does until we realize, at least to some extent, what God is!

Even greater than the sharing of God's tasks is the sharing of God's love. To share God's activities, share God's ambitions! It is significant that Jesus did not say: "Thou shalt *serve* the Lord with all. . . ." What he did say was: "Thou shalt *love* the Lord thy God with all. . . ." Love, and you will serve. "In order to dispose our hearts to devotion," said an old bishop, "the active life is to be preferred to the contemplative." This is one of those half-truths we do well to beware of. For everything depends upon the kind of contemplation and the sort of activity engaged in. Any mysticism that is only subjective ought to be rejected, and so should any Christianity that is chiefly objective. Jesus had the order in order: " Love God . . . love your neighbor." These are not two sides of the same thing. The one results from the other! Worship puts men to work in the one spirit that *will* work, in the long run.

How deliberately then should God be kept first and foremost in our lives and labors, in our programs of worship and work. And how little that is done! The press reported a certain author as saying that in the Protestant churches there is " as fine a preoccupation with problems of conduct and duty as has probably ever been shown by any people since the world began." But for spiritual power, that writer went to the Roman Catholic church! Her solution may not have been the best, but the incident illustrates what we know all too well: that the average Protestant church spends too much energy on good causes, and not enough on goodness:

" But chief of all thy wondrous works,
Supreme of all thy plan,
Thou hast put an upward reach
Into the heart of man."

All too much our services for worship fail to satisfy "the upward reach." The normal soul "longeth, yea, even fainteth" for God, for the living God, for God, the reality. And how is this longing met? With very little heart! To permit the Lord's day to be any sort of subsidiary day, and to lower it to secondary uses, is to manifest a lack of spiritual sensitiveness. There is nothing greater to be said of a day than that it is the Lord's day! And there is nothing finer we can do, for our soul's good, and for society's, than to keep it the Lord's day! Otherwise, while we are busy here and there, religion is gone. People come to church of a Sunday asking bread, and we give them a subscription blank!

Catechisms are not pedagogical any more; if they were, we could stand one something like this:

Question:

What is the first great care of Christians when convened?

Answer:

To apprehend, appreciate, appropriate God.

"Religion is the chief concern
Of mortals here below;
May I its great importance learn,
Its sovereign virtue know."

Question:

What is the next great care of Christians when convened?

Answer:

To help conscience on.

"Quick as the apple of an eye
O God, my conscience make!
Awake my soul when sin is nigh
And keep it still awake."

Question:

What is the first great care of Christians when adjourned?

Answer:

To bring the Spirit of Jesus into all of life.

"Christian, rise, and act thy creed,
Let thy prayer be in thy deed.
Seek the right, perform the true,
Raise thy work and life anew."

That is it: God first, then service will follow. Many controversies have been waged about faith and works. One said: Let faith come first; another said, No: works! Whatever theoretical answer we as Protestants may have made to this question, practically we have settled it in favor of works. We are so slow of heart to understand. All the while we fail to see that nothing will make us more conscientious than an awareness of God, provided only the God we are aware of has the conscience of Christ.

In our services in church and in our group thinking, we have allowed the secondary, indispensable and inevitable as it is, to get into the way of the primary, and the consequence is a lowered morale throughout. We see the woe of the world and it is no wonder that we are moved with compassion, and that ethical endeavor should be so prominently in our thought. But, after all, we must not merely see the woe of the world. We need to see God! For then we shall see not the negative condition of the world, but the positive power available for it and in it; and we shall also see something beyond ethics that yet is ethical: the love that needs no law! It has been said several times in these pages that Pentecost initiates the power which achieves the ethical results of Jesus' Spirit. The power is primary! Christianity could not be the religion it is had it not the God it has!

IV

In Protestantism we have also succumbed to the snare of the short cut. This is another cause of our lack of vitality.

Back in pentecostal days there were those who wanted to buy their way in. Luke gives us the story of one Simon — not Peter. He was not altogether bad. He had some admirable traits. He had had a great run in Samaria. His bewitching sorcery had impressed folks and brought him profit. All went well until Philip arrived. That meant trouble. For Philip began to preach Jesus. His preaching had wide effect, and his ministry met with phenomenal success. There was great joy in that city. People flocked to Philip's cause. When so many believed, Simon " believed " also. He openly espoused the work of Philip. But Philip saw deep. So did the apostles back in Jerusalem. They saw at a glance what Philip had seen all along. The Spirit as yet was " fallen upon none of them." Therein lay the tragedy.

Peter and John and Philip knew just what that meant. That had been exactly their plight — before Pentecost. So Peter and John thought best to come to the aid of Philip. Together they prayed, and put their hands, as well as their hearts, to the task. It was not long before a great revival broke out. Simon had an eye to business. So he offered them money, saying, " Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost."

The King James version tones down Peter's response: " But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee." It is said of an eminent modern translator that he is fond of illustrating by means of Peter's actual language upon this occasion how the literal translation of some passages would shock us in our day. For what Peter said to Simon was: " To hell with you and your money! " And he was in the Spirit when so he spoke! That retort shocked Simon so that he asked for prayers then and there! Simon's attempt, and that of Ananias, were of a piece. They wanted to buy their way in; and they did that because they wanted to ease their way in.

There is real danger these days, when tithing, as has been indicated, for many is synonymous with stewardship, that we shall suppose that the giving of money is a fair substitute for spiritual participation. But the short cut is not always financial. Sometimes people try to be religious only in their emotions; and that way disaster lies. Sometimes people try to be religious only with their minds; to quote Masefield, " they love not light, but talk about it."

Where is the church in which one does not find some officers who are smugly satisfied that the doing of the chores of the church in an efficient manner is all that is to be expected of them? Where is the church in which one does not find some who feel that their splendid ability to pray in public justifies the subtle spiritual pride they take in the performance?

The passion for the short cut possesses many preachers. As one humorist has observed, they seem to think that they must make the bread of life out of flowers rather than out of flour. Take the "religious page" of a newspaper in any sizeable town or city, and see from the advertisements and the subjects to what spiritual leanness Protestants shamelessly own! What inane rivalry to see who can best cajole a crowd into his church! And what inordinate adulation of the man who does!

We need a Pentecost, and need it soon, to bring Protestantism back to first (which, being interpreted, is pentecostal) principles; to bring it to the place where it will no longer make the good the enemy of the best, or give the secondary the place of the primary; to reduce it to sackcloth and ashes for its shallowness and its "get-there-quick" methods; so that it may go forth, in newness of life, with the message and the demonstration that God cares how we behave!

CHAPTER XII

PENTECOST IN PROTESTANTISM

I

MANY Protestants are either irreligious, or take religion in minute doses. They engage in superstitious or routine acts. They give but little time or thought to public worship — " public " meaning, at least, that a person witnesses with his worship to the value he places on it. It may yet turn out that Protestantism will stand or fall with its public services. Protestantism is and has an indispensable contribution toward Christianizing the world. It has brought, and must maintain, religious freedom. But that is never going to be done simply by being united on freedom. That is all most Protestants are; and, to not a few of them, even that is more a shibboleth than a conviction.

Protestantism must be united, not on freedom, but *in God!* Until Protestantism becomes, not just a loose union of people agreed upon religious liberty, but a deep unity of people immersed in the Spirit, neither freedom nor Christianity, in any deep sense, can prevail. The Protestantism that was a Reformation must be a reformation, but now chiefly of itself. Protestantism must not only keep religion free, but it must free religion. How better can this be done than by a constant and consistent public witnessing to the fact that we consider God most consequential? Protestantism must live in God if it is to live together. Thus far its divisiveness and suspicion have made fellowship difficult. Christianity must conquer through cooperation.

II

There are three foes, up-to-date foes, who work Protestantism ill. Softness is one of these. John Wesley once said of a man that " his constitution was impaired by the softness of a genteel education." But our softness is more easily acquired. For while the universe discovered by science tends toward faith, the world which applied science creates tends away from it. Not many of us are called upon to lead rugged lives. Browning once had something to say about " machinery just meant to give thy soul its bent," but the machinery upon which modern civilization is so dependent, and from which it takes its mood, gives our souls a bent in the wrong direction, Stuart Chase persuasively to the contrary notwithstanding.

Paralleling the tyranny of the machine is the tyranny of things. People regard life as "a goblet to be drained, not a measure to be filled." Shabby thinking always follows soft living. Public opinion itself becomes tyrannical; until one hears that everything can be settled by majority vote. Evangelism degenerates into a go-getter movement. If there was one thing Pentecost did for the disciples, it was to put stern stuff into them. Living in the Spirit brought them, not power to pamper, but power to persevere. They were "more than conquerors through him."

Another foe is over-intellectualization. A year or so ago there appeared a book with the title, "The Scientific World View." I looked at it in amazement. Had it come to this? Was some scientist willing to go on record that he had put blinders on his brains, and would now view the world only with the eyes of science? I opened the book; and sure enough, there it was! The author was not much of a scientist, and there was little to indicate that philosophy was his forte; and as a psychologist he was in worst case of all. My surprise was not at the book, but at the fact that a book of that sort would have a sale!

Now, strange as the information would be to that author, and strange as it seems to many of us, people are never going to be content with a scientific world view. This, not because they are morons, but because they are humans. There just is not enough to a scientific world view to satisfy minds so made that they outrun science. Nothing short of a cosmic view is going to satisfy us. And it is this that Protestantism forgets all too much! We ought never to oppose faith to reason. But we have been as proud of a scientific religious view as was that writer of his scientific world view; and, like him, with nary a blush, but with many a dogmatism! Let us respect science, and never, in our religious thinking, fail to recognize its worth. But let us surpass science. Let the recurring note be, " Just beyond lies God! " Our world view should always be scientific, but we dare never rest content with a scientific world view.

The third foe of Protestantism is paganism. That has always been our foe, but it has its strictly modern aspects. What unsparing wealth, what unrelieved poverty, what lawlessness, lust, inconsiderateness, exploitation! " There was a time," said the late Edward Bok, himself successful, " when the monasteries, the church, or the absolute monarch ruled the destinies of men. Now money is king. Business is our God. Commerce rules." And, he added, " the fall of the house is not far off."[1] Unless, we may add, Pentecost should come our way! A paganism that goes after the world's goods in the world's ways for selfish purposes is the archfoe of a Pentecost that uses the world's goods in Christ's way for human purposes. So long as we keep Christ out of business, we shall do small business for Christ.

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[1] Edward Bok, *Dollars Only* (Charles Scribner's Sons).

Grace Scribner, whom many of us deemed it so high an honor to know, once wrote in a letter that she wondered what a flower in a dark cellar would say if it could think and speak. She thought it would say that it felt within itself the possibility of doing better than just bringing forth dwarfed, distorted blossoms. It might also wonder if it were not itself just a little to blame for not taking more advantage of that streak of light coming in through the cobwebs. Yet, all the while, if life were as it should be for that flower, if only it had sunshine galore and the right rich soil, how much better it could do with itself than it can ever hope to do down there in that cellar!

Life is like that for many people — it gives them so little chance compared to what life could offer if only the environment were conducive to their development. Pagans seldom think of that; or if they do, they forget! Now the shame of Protestantism is not so much that we measure our success by worldly standards, by rich laymen, unusual salaries, great crowds, big plate collections, splendid "plants," but that we do not measure the standards by which we measure with the mind and Spirit of Christ! Protestantism needs to be so pentecostal that its collective exaltation of Christ will issue both in collective and personal commitment to social redemption.

III

At this writing, Protestantism finds itself in a strange predicament. To counteract these three foes, or, at least, in an attempt to keep itself Christian, it has embraced three friends who, up to now, prove themselves distressingly fickle!

The first of these is the social gospel itself. In an older terminology, it might be said of the pentecostal people that they were entirely sanctified; they began to act and think and aspire in such Christlike ways that one could easily tell them apart. They did not have to recite a creed, or subscribe to some church confession, to convince one how Christian they were. One could tell them a long way off! But so soon as the hope of the physical return of the Lord became uppermost in the thought of these disciples, Pentecost no longer had dominion in their minds.

Had Pentecost been perpetuated more steadily; had more of it been evident in the career of the church through the centuries, the social gospel could not have come with the element of novelty and discovery with which it arrived in Protestantism a few generations ago. This strength of surprise was also its weakness. For now the emphasis became undue. We cannot divide entities and keep them, as Solomon shrewdly suggested when a baby was at stake. The social gospel must be social, but still it must be gospel.

One frequently hears the complaint that those who preach the social gospel preach nothing else! It is significant that the outstanding leader in American Protestantism today is not only socially minded, but a profound and philosophical student of the idea of God. For you cannot take God out of good, and have a gospel. Simply to make some overtures in that direction; simply, in some dim and isolated fashion to acknowledge, but not to advocate a God, is both to take the Spirit and the *spirit* out of Protestantism.

No friend of Protestantism more fatally proves its foe than religious education, as expressed in its dominant forms. Everybody will agree with Bishop Temple that religious education, *per se,* is the main function of the church. There can be no doubt that this is what it must come to be! How comes it then that so many religious educators, as Reinhold Niebuhr puts it, " with all their pious phraseology and supposedly modern pedagogy . . . are really decadent forces"?[2] It is a long and pathetic story — all the more pathetic because those in control of our educational hierarchy show no inclination to bring forth fruits worthy of repentance. It can but be hinted at here. One difficulty is that conceit has entered in. A new science usually brooks no interference — and modern religious pedagogy brooks little or none.

The writer participated in a discussion carried on by a leading weekly. Men whose names are a household word in American Protestantism expressed their fears that religious education was going astray. And, shorn of petty personalities, the answer of the apologist of these forces revealed not a single suggestion that there could be anything wrong with religious education today. If you say that he put his case too strongly, remember that he is still putting it, and under their auspices!

The blunt fact is that the advantage of the technique is being nullified by the dogmatism of the technicians. There are those of us who frankly fear that the International Council of Religious Education is chiefly a hierarchy of methodology; and like the hierarchy of the Middle Ages, it enforces its mandates by anathemas! Whoever questions the procedures is therefore and forthwith

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[2] Reinhold Niebuhr, *Leaves From the Notebook of a Tamed Cynic* (Willett, Clark & Colby).

"belated." This conceit makes religious education really a separatist movement, under pretense of being all-sufficient. What business, they have asked not infrequently of late, has the pulpit, what with us about? When specialization tends to make men sectional, the trouble is not that the scope of their work is partial, but that their outlook becomes so. Religious education must lose its life to find it!

But even the technique which its protagonists so earnestly defend against all comers leaves some things to be desired. For religious educators are, in large part, at the futile task of striving to make a science of an art![8] As Dr. Giddings Bell has pointed out, one dominant principal in worship is "naïveté on the part of the worshipers." Some of our modern moralists are entirely right in insisting that preachers and church school teachers must cease reciting the nonentities of sexual codes they have not themselves thought through. So religious education must cease repeating the futilities of worship codes until they have themselves thought worship through. Certainly, many of their "worship programs" give no hint at all that, whatever else it is, worship is ever the appreciation, adoration and appropriation of that Spirit upon which we place our ultimate reliance. Their pedagogical methods de-pentecostalize Protestantism. The power to get God in and to let God through is an art, and not a science; and when one makes the former out as the latter, he makes religion of none effect through his pedagogy.

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[8] Read the unusual discussion by Canon Streeter in *Reality*.

But modern religious education has most to answer for, from the viewpoint of Pentecost, upon the score that it lacks social heroism. Perhaps this is because of its strong interdenominationalism; hence there is the toning down when it comes to social issues. Compare the religious educational literature of Methodism, to name but one denomination, with the " International Journal," and note the contrast, in almost any issue, between the social-mindedness of the denominational journals and that of the International Council. Yet, even denominationally, social venturesomeness is none too marked. All along the line, there is the pathetic spectacle of religious education as pedagogically modernistic but socially reactionary!

Another friend that plays Protestantism false is individualism. Religion is such a personal matter that no one can have it for you. You must have it for yourself. This is a point Protestantism blessed the whole world with; and all of us may proudly continue to contend for the priesthood of believers. Yet, while this has the benefits of introspection, it also has the dangers of it. This has run the gamut all the way from those who feel that they are the special favorites of deity to those who look to religion pre-eminently for what it can do for them.

Of late, there has been a renaissance of individualism. Groups have been used for personal confessional purposes and for individual guidance, rather than for the furtherance of fellowship and the emergence of ethical endeavors in the Spirit of Christ. This is not to say that providence and prayer are not strategic factors in the pentecostal life. They are. " The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart." This is to say that the important thing is less that God gives directions *for* our lives and more that God gives direction *to* our lives. With Lincoln, we are eager to be on the side God is on. When Protestantism makes the individual primary and the Fellowship of those who have faith in the Spirit secondary, it goes contrary to the standards of the New Testament and to the genius of Christianity.

IV.

We have looked at our hindrances. We have also seen some of the forces that should help, but yet prevent us. How now shall Protestants perpetuate Pentecost?

Certainly not by being blind to these forces. But chiefly by groups that see the light and have the might of the Spirit of Jesus. Since Gustav Le Bon did his epoch-making work, we know that groups that are together may easily be apart, and that physical proximity does not always mean spiritual solidarity. With what we know now of the " mob-mind," we realize that a group does not have to sit together in order to think alike. It is no small problem how to keep people from being herded together intellectually through the newspapers or through other agencies affecting public opinion. We must somehow learn to safeguard the individual in the group.

But with all that said, it still remains true that togetherness and nearness do have a contribution to make. No one can doubt that after reading Stanley Jones' " The Christ at the Round Table." Virtually all the dynamic spiritual leaders of the present time find groups for meditation or discussion or seminars in spirituality of great inspiration to them. And, as has been indicated previously, groups of this sort have a collective power and impact. In these fellowships people show the Spirit of Christ to each other, but also is the Spirit of Christ shown forth in and by the Fellowship.

The big question in Protestantism today is whether our churches can hope to be Fellowships in the Spirit; whether they can be pentecostal movements! One hesitates to answer that. Certainly, it is not a question of size. It is a question of aspiration. What sort of religion are we after in Protestantism: Are we after God or just something for ourselves? Whether or not individual churches can be such Fellowships, our churches can certainly house and encourage them. Since virtually everything worth while has been the work of minorities, minorities in Protestantism may yet lead it back to a Spirit-filled life.

It will probably always be true that some groups shall have to venture farther and better than humanity as a whole ever can. Only groups that can transcend today can transform tomorrow. Spacious spirits, life-wide, soul-deep, God-high, must be in the van of the church, and lead all Christendom into the Kingdom. Where the masses are individualistic, these groups will have the consciousness of fellowship; where they are dogmatic, these will be adaptive; where those will be ethical standpatters, these will utilize the whole social order for spiritual adventuring. No longer, with them, shall the good be the enemy of the best, the secondary supplant the primary, or the short cut be the common road.

Softness, over-intellectualization, paganism, shall be eliminated by the substitution of a gospel that is social, yet more than social; an education, with scientific technique, but Spirit-centered and ethically adventurous for the purpose of fellowship in the faith; and a private religious experience that shall cause a person more concern for the success of the spiritual than for making himself a spiritual success, much as he shall desire that too. The Spirit of Jesus, operative in such groups — the Spirit, that is, of creativeness, considerateness, of honesty, of forgiveness, of understanding, of service, of faith, of love — will mold its members into men and women who shall be not only Christlike but Christly!

V

Pentecost was a gift; it was the gift of a spirit, the gift of the Spirit of Jesus: that Holy Spirit Jesus not merely taught, but lived. It came because the disciples had the wisdom to obey Jesus. This collective religious experience revealed the Spirit of Jesus in and through the Fellowship. Because of this Fellowship the church got its start. Pentecost also made a change in the disciples individually: they saw Christ alive, cosmic, inexhaustible; the vision gave them heroism; they began to be characterized by dynamic, victorious living. They became intrepid exhibitors of the Incarnation:

"What we have seen and felt
With confidence we tell,
And publish to the sons of men
The signs infallible."

And Pentecost sent them forth to evangelize others; the missionary motive was central in their thought. They began a long line of ethical adventures in the Spirit of Jesus, and we are in their line of succession. No one knows for certain whether Pentecost has ever been duplicated. Probably we could not tell even if it had. What we are sure of is that it has been perpetuated in degree as groups subscribed to the supremacy of Jesus, and stood ready to square their conduct with his way of life. God gave those groups a massive understanding of the gospel. He will do that always, with groups that seek to perpetuate Pentecost — to live the life of fellowship in the Spirit of Christ.

Let us not claim too much for Pentecost. But let it be noted that it is a regular number on the program of the Kingdom. It was originally a collective experience that Christianized individuals by fusing them into the Fellowship of the faithful and the faith, and that Christianized conditions by the revelations of the privileges of love made to the Fellowship. But this does not mean that Pentecost must always start the same way.

A tremendous individual experience may Christianize a group. Come to think of it, both were true; for the Pentecost we date to the Harvest Festival actually dates back to Christ. Pentecost produced souls who produced Pentecosts, or, at least, the pentecostal — women as well as men who speak as men speak only as they are moved of the Holy Ghost; and men as well as women who act as women act only as the Spirit stirs their lives. All pentecostal spirits further pentecostal tasks and are furthered by them. The most vital contributions to the spiritual life of Christendom came from groups who were intent upon ethical rather than doctrinal changes, for Pentecosts may always be known by their fruits. Always, that is, if you have eyes to see, and if you have the perspective of those practical mystics who shared the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, and gloried in his cross.

Date Due

My 24 '44			
Ap 27 '42			
Jl 29 '43			
F 28 '44			
Mr 26 '46			
Je 11 '46			
AP 28 '50			
JA 18 '51			
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